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ADrift WITH A VENGEANCE:

A Tale of Love and Adventure.

BY
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ADRIFT WITH A VENGEANCE.

CHAPTER I.

I FALL INTO THE HANDS OF A SHREW.

As memory is not born with our birth, but ripens with our growth, the recollections of my childhood previous to my seventh year are dim as a dream to me now. Everything that occurred to me, if remembered at all, I can only see as through a glass darkly; and a perpetual haze envelops the incidents which I sometimes vainly strive to place in bolder relief against the background of Time. It will be enough if, resting my reliance upon memory in preference to tradition, I give the chronicle of my life in the order in which events occurred to me, commencing as far back as I can remember, and no farther.

I am thus led to a small village, on the New-England seaboard, not far from Boston, where I cultivated the habit of making mud-pies, and indulged a natural propensity for other congenial tasks, and, I hope, harmless amusements common to children of my age. There I had my home in the cottage of one to whom I first lisped the sublime name of Mother, who had nursed me in infancy, and followed my tottering steps when, escaping from the restraints of a cradle, I first essayed to walk; who cherished me as her own, although I was not her own. It was a delusion almost natural to childhood that I should have conceived her to be my mother, although as a child I knew not what mother meant; and I was disappointed when, with the advance of years, I came to the knowledge that she was only my foster-mother, and that my own origin was involved in obscurity.

It was a sad day for me when I was taken in terror and tears from her side, by a man I had never seen before the previous

afternoon, when he called to inquire about me, and demanded that I should be delivered over to him. I can well remember how I resisted his efforts to lead me away, till I found resistance useless, and reluctantly accompanied him from the cottage with a parting kiss from my affectionate foster-mother, whose grief was nearly as great as my own. With him I travelled by coach to Boston, where I was taken up a narrow flight of stairs into a small dark office, and there introduced to another, equally a stranger to me; a lawyer, as I subsequently discovered, Barker by name. He was a stern, unkindly-looking man, and I felt afraid of him; and when the door was shut, I struggled frantically to open it, and sobbed bitterly, notwithstanding the repeated calls of those present for silence. After the lapse of a few minutes, I was put into a carriage, and, accompanied by both, driven to the private door of a cheerless stone building, situated within a mile of Boston Common, where one Mrs. Bangs filled the position of housekeeper, and her son Robert that of librarian.

"Here you are to live," said one of the two men to me, "and Mrs. Bangs will take good care of you."

"I shall never be able to do anything with him if he cries in that way," said she, and I was exhorted to hold my peace by repeated hushes, and threats of punishment. I cried piteously to be taken back to the cottage from which I had come, but cried in vain.

Mrs. Bangs was a widow of about fifty-five years, with a small, thin, wiry frame, a pale complexion, restless, gray eyes, and short corkscrew ringlets, of nearly the same color. Her nose was sharp and pointed, like the beak of a bird, and she had a thin, firm lip, out of which I regretted to learn a favorite parrot had once been treacherous enough to bite a piece, that indicated to some extent a temper which had driven from her all of her five sons, but this the youngest, and made her prudently avoided by all who knew her.

I did not take to her kindly at first sight; and when the two men who had conducted me to her were about to leave, I jumped from the chair where I had been sitting, and clung to them in dread of being left in such a gloomy place, with such a cold, unsympathizing woman. Intuition told me that I

could never like her, nor she me. Age had blunted her feelings, and like most old people she had no love of children. I followed the men to the door, but I was thrust back ; the door closed, and I was left alone with the old widow and her son. He was a tall, pale, thin, sanctimonious-looking young man, of about twenty-six, dressed in faded black, with a neck-cloth of the same color wound twice round his throat, and he had the manner and appearance of a student. I felt his presence soothing, but was still unwilling to remain where I was, and burst into tears at intervals, and cried for them to open the door. I was as disconsolate as a dog after losing his master, as frightened as a field-lark when first caged.

“Now, come, come ; I’ll put you to bed right away, if you make any more of that noise,” said Mrs. Bangs sternly.

For the moment I was awed into silence, but the next my grief grew louder than before. I was therefore taken upstairs to a room, over the kitchen, and commanded to undress, and get into bed, which I did, when Mrs. Bangs left me to my own reflections, with the parting admonition not to stir out of that till morning. It was only sun-set, but, thank Heaven, I sobbed myself to sleep. Morning came, and I was aroused early by the voice of Mrs. Bangs, saying, “Come, get up,” simultaneously with which she pulled the bedclothes off me, and then marched out of the room to complete a toilet evidently unfinished.

In a few minutes she returned, saying peremptorily, “Are you ready ? Come down stairs ; I want to show you how to make the fire.”

I was only half-dressed, but I followed her mechanically to the kitchen, where, after opening the shutter of the solitary window, which looked into a narrow, blind yard, with high, dead walls on either side, she commenced the work of making a fire, and instructing me as to the arrangement of paper, chips, and coals, and the application of the match.

“Now,” she said, after the fire began to crackle in the grate, “go and clean Mr. Bangs’ boots. Take them out into the yard ; and here’s the blacking and brushes.”

I obeyed, but sullenly.

“No sulking now,” she spoke, “you’re to do every thing I

bid you, without a word. A pret'ty how-do-you-do indeed if you're to come here and live like a fine gentleman, for two dollars and-a-half a week. We told Mr. Barker, the lawyer as brought you here, that we wouldn't take you if it wasn't that we thought you'd be useful, now that I'm growing old, and we can't afford to keep a servant, and it's as much as I can do to make both ends meet. We only took you out of charity, because you were a poor orphan boy, and I'm sorry that we were fools enough to do it now."

At breakfast I was served with a dish of mush and milk, the former being unpalatable by reason both of its having settled into lumps for want of stirring, and being burnt in the saucepan.

"Look at him, look at him," said Mrs. Bangs, calling her son's attention to the expression of my countenance as I endeavored to swallow the meal. "Don't be making those faces," she commanded sternly. "If you don't like it, lump it, as dogs do dumplings. That's what Mr. Barker ordered you to get twice a day—morning and night—and nothing else. Come, come," she at length remarked, rising from her seat at the adjoining breakfast-table—I was placed to eat mine standing at a sideboard, where she was in the habit of washing dishes, ironing clothes, and chopping suet—"we'll have no more of that," and suiting the action to the word, she removed the mush and milk from before me, and conveyed it to the pantry, leaving me to hunger till dinner-time.

Mr. Bangs was a bachelor; and, besides myself, he and his mother were the only occupants of the place. The building was used chiefly as a medical library; but it also embraced a museum of pathology and mineralogy, a laboratory in which preparations were made, and several rooms which were occasionally let for public purposes, but chiefly devoted to medical meetings. It was supported by a society of members, and managed by officers elected from among their number, just like any club; and the salary allotted to Mr. Bangs was the moderate sum of four hundred dollars a year, and to his mother, as house-keeper, one hundred dollars only.

I was compelled to rise at six o'clock every morning, and if I ever failed in being up at that hour, Mrs. Bangs was always

ready with the lash. "Washington, are you up?" she would call from the small room opposite that in which I slept, on a straw mattress, laid in one corner of the floor; and if there was no response, she would march in, and arouse me by dashing a cup of water into my face, and dragging away the bed-clothes. "Why don't you get up, you wretch?" she would scream in her scanty raiment, and then retire, with her warning voice sounding: "If you've not lighted that fire before I'm dressed, my lad, I'll give you such a thrashing as you have never had in your life before."

On first going down-stairs, I had to open the shutters, unlock the kitchen and private door; and then taking the key of the building from its accustomed peg, pursue my way down the blind yard to a door at the end of the same, which, having unlocked, I continued along a dark, winding passage leading into the hall, where I unlocked and unbolted the front-door, and opened the shutters. Hurrying back, I made the kitchen-fire, brushed the floor, swept the hearth, polished the grate, and then industriously commenced to brush the boots, by which time there was generally a ring of the bell, and I rushed to admit the woman who came every morning to clean the building. Before I came, these duties were alternately or jointly performed by mother and son.

"Who are you?" asked the house-cleaner, a kind New-England woman with a large family and small means, the first time I opened the door for her.

I was confused by her question, and replied: "I've come to live here. Are you Mrs. Hollis?"

"Yes." And assured by her answer that I had not admitted an improper character, I was about to return to the kitchen.

"Stop!" said she. "Is your name Bangs?"

"No," I answered timidly, "my name's Washington."

"Washington!" she exclaimed, raising her hands; "what a big name for such a little boy."

I was immediately indignant at being called little, and showed it by a defiant look and a frown, telling her at the same time that I was not little.

"Well, what's your other name, my dear?" she continued inquisitively.

"I don't know."

"Why, where did you come from not to know your name?"

"I came from Kate Wilkins's."

The woman's eyes beamed with surprise. "Why, are you the little boy that was found in the carpet-bag?"

I felt humbled, and colored. I had heard about that carpet-bag before, and I felt that it was not a proper place for me to have been found in, although I was in blissful ignorance of the inferences to which it gave rise, for I knew nothing about the law of multiplication, or the institution of marriage, merely entertaining a vague idea that the incident of the carpet-bag had been preceded by my original discovery in a parsley-bed, or bower of roses, from which I was transmitted, after the manner of all babies, in a band-box, to that mysterious personage, my mother. But who was she? Alas! I was unconscious of having ever known her love.

"Are you the little boy from Green?"

"Yes," I answered, surprised at her knowing anything whatever about me.

"I've a sister that knows you," she said.

"Oh! have you?" I inquired with fresh interest. "What's her name?"

"Mrs. Mills. Don't you know her—the school-teacher?"

"Yes, I think I do," I replied.

Further conversation was interrupted by the appearance of Mrs. Bangs, who suddenly darted out of the passage leading from the house to the hall, where she had been listening to the dialogue.

"Go into the kitchen this minute, Sir," she shouted, rushing upon me and following up her command with a kick, and she drove me before her like a dog. "How dare you stop here talking, when I told you to come straight back and finish cleaning those candle-sticks?"

"It was my fault," said the woman, coming to the rescue.

"Well, I've got to teach him obedience, and I won't allow him to chit-chat with you or any one else."

I returned sobbing to the kitchen.

"Come, come! if you don't stop crying I'll wring your young neck for you," threatened my persecutor. "I'll make you smart, I can tell you."

After this I received strict injunctions never again to speak to the woman who cleaned the building, and she was requested to mind her own business.

The time for closing the library was eight o'clock in winter and nine in summer, but meetings occurred on an average four times a week, which kept the building open till about eleven. The working-day was therefore always long.

After breakfast Mr. Bangs invariably took his way to the library, which was opened to members at half-past nine. There he sat in front of a large table, attending to his duties as librarian, and rising to open the door whenever the bell was rung, unless I was there to do it for him, or a member at the other end of the room asked for a book. To them he was a standing volume of reference, for, knowing every book in the library, he could produce all the authorities on any given subject within the range of medical science. He was a walking catalogue, and as useful as an encyclopedia to those who applied to him for information. The life or death of many a patient depended upon the books he gave them, for according to those they pursued their treatment, and as one man's food is, in medicine, another man's poison, they lived or died by accident, for, unfortunately it frequently happens that the writers of medical books are no wiser than those who accept them as their guides.

It was the business of Mr. Bangs to address the printed circulars calling meetings of the members; and it was also his business to post them, charging the institution with the amount of postage. But, in order to divert the latter to his own advantage, it was his habit to deliver, with the assistance of his mother, all those within the city of Boston. Mother and son were equally active in going from house to house, leaving these periodical announcements for the moderate sum which would otherwise have been paid to the post-office.

I had not been long in the cheerless stone building, before I was called upon to serve an apprenticeship in this letter-carrying business.

"Put on your cap and come with me," said Mrs. Bangs, one morning, at about nine; and she led me all over Boston, giving me a circular to hand in whenever she came to the house

of a member, and allowing me to overtake her after doing it, and calling me a fiend, and threatening to flog me within an inch of my life if I kept her waiting. In this way I soon became acquainted with the city and the residences of the members, and after that I was sent out regularly to deliver circulars, as well as to leave and receive books. I became, in other words, the established errand-boy of the concern, without salary, always receiving more kicks than pence for my pains.

Mrs. Bangs contracted for the supply of coffee and cakes at some of the meetings, at twenty-five cents a head to those who partook of the refreshments. It was my business to carry in the tray containing cups and saucers, and otherwise make myself generally useful as a waiter; but Mr. Bangs usually carried in the coffee-pot, which his mother frequently brought to the door stealthily, and then, on seeing him, berated him severely for not coming to the kitchen for it. He would on such occasions endeavor to silence her by a prolonged "Hush!" but her tongue would continue wagging till he entered the room and closed the door behind him. Meanwhile she would retire towards the kitchen bewailing her condition in something like the following language:

"Here I'm toiling and slaving from morning till night—morning till night, wearing my body out by inches; provoked all day long by a foolish son and that wretch of a boy, and what do I get for it all? I'll not do it any longer. I'll not pinch myself as I have done; I'm sick and tired of it. Here I've not spent half a dollar on my back for years, but have gone on patching and mending till I'm thoroughly worn out, and can hardly see out of my eyes." "Why don't you wear spectacles?" says Rob. "Yes, it's all very well to talk, but where's the money to come from? How are we to find the money to pay the calls on his shares—I wish they were at the bottom of the sea—and to pay for his lectures only by saving every little thing?"

On returning to the kitchen, she invariably vented her indignation upon me if I happened to be there, and threatened to turn me into the street if I ever vexed her again.

With the lapse of time she proved herself a vixen of the most unmitigated character, and I was the special object of her

wrath. She was a woman of no natural or acquired refinement, and she had no more mercy than a bloodhound. Yet she always strengthened her arguments and intensified her denunciations with quotations from the Bible, and was alike with her son a regular attendant at a Methodist Church, where she had paid pew-rent for many years. At love-feasts, too, she was seldom absent, and occasionally she presented herself at a class meeting, of which she was a member, and whenever her conscience permitted she received the holysacrament. But where her Christian virtues lay, I could never discover. At her hands I suffered perpetual martyrdom. She had a natural inclination to inflict corporal punishment, and she lost no opportunity of gratifying it at my expense. "Spare the rod and spoil the child," was one of her favorite quotations, always accompanied by a blow or a kick, an application of the birch rod, or a by no means gentle pulling of the ears. I have a distinct recollection of having been frequently knocked down by her with the assistance of a broom-stick, and then of her manifesting a sort of fiendish delight in crushing me under her feet. She always kept a rod, or a cane, or both, (which she charged for as extras in my board-bill), suspended in one corner of the room, which answered the double purpose of kitchen and dining-room, and where I acted in the capacity of a boy of all work when not engaged in the building, by which I mean that portion of it distinct from the house, as the rooms occupied by the Bangs' were called.

I had a hard life, indeed, with Mrs. Bangs, for, in addition to the duties I have already named, I was often called upon to assist in the washing of dishes and the peeling of potatoes. I had, moreover, to clean the windows of the house and make my own bed; while, as the custom of the Bangs' was too insignificant for any tradesman to feel it worth his while to send a man for orders, I had all the shopping to do. I had to carry home the meal, hominy or oat-meal for making my own breakfast, and the flour for making bread, for Mrs. Bangs considered it more economical to make her own than to buy it ready-made, and I had to carry the kneaded dough to a bake-house afterwards and bring back a tally by way of receipt. I had to go to the butcher's and the corner grocery-store and perform

similar drudgery, and all because it was my misfortune to have been put to board with Mrs. Bangs. It was a cruel fate, and I often wept over my condition. But I was helpless. I supplicated to be allowed to go back to Kate Wilkins, but Mrs. Bangs swore that if I ever spoke on the subject again she would be the death of me. "Yes," said she, "a — like you would look well going back there. Let me hear you talk of that again."

The Bangs had no visitors, beyond a very few relatives who came to see them only at long intervals, and a ring of the bell at the private-door always created a sensation when no one was expected. It was a bell seldom rung, save by one of the three regular inmates of that cheerless building. By myself it was always pulled with extreme gentleness to prevent its striking more than once; by Mrs. Bangs it was invariably pulled quickly and with violence, and pulled again if by any chance I was not on the spot to open it promptly; by the librarian himself it was pulled timidly, so as to produce a feeble uncertain sound in the kitchen where it hung, for Mrs. Bangs flew into a passion with any one who rang it loudly. Frequently, indeed, the librarian was afraid to ring it all, and merely tapped at the door with his stick. He seldom had occasion to do either, but at night, for he went out regularly, unless on "meeting nights," after closing the library, and remained till eleven, and rarely a moment longer. His mother always sat up for him darning his clothes, and if he failed to return within the prescribed time, her wrath was great indeed.

I had endured the miseries of my lot for about a year, when one day, about noon, the bell rang and Mrs. Bangs said, "Who can that be at this time of day?" and took her way into the little front-parlor which looked out upon the street, where she saw from the window by a slight twist of the neck, that a strange woman, in homely garments, was at the door. She would not allow me to go to the door because I had a black eye and a cut cheek, the result of a severe pummelling with a brush-handle on the previous day, but she opened it herself. Her foregone conclusion was, that the woman was a beggar, and to beggars she never gave, for said she, "they all come to thiefe." She therefore merely opened the door a few inches

and gave in answer to an anticipated petition for alms, "Go away, we 've nothing for you," and shut the door again, notwithstanding the hand outside, which endeavored to delay the movement while a word of explanation was offered.

"Now, go and black-lead that grate," she said, returning to the kitchen, where I had just finished peeling some potatoes, for she had an objection to having them boiled in what she called their jackets.

The next moment the bell was again rung.

CHAPTER II.

VERY MYSTERIOUS.

"The impudence of these beggars," said Mrs. Bangs, "passes all belief," and she went to the door again in a rage, and seeing the same woman there, said: "What do you want?"

"I want to see my foster-child," was the reply; "and I've come ten miles to see him."

"Whom do you mean?" asked Mrs. Bangs, jealous of intrusion. I know nothing about your foster-child."

"Well, he's here—that I know," said the stranger somewhat indignantly, and at the same moment she caught sight of my inquiring eyes in the passage, and exclaimed in triumph, "There he is! there he is!" and rushing past Mrs. Bangs, threw her arms around me and kissed me.

Mrs. Bangs never forgave me for that.

"My dear, poor boy," said the woman, "I've not seen him for so long I hardly knew him. What's the matter with your face, Washington? Where did you get that black eye, and that mark on your cheek?"

Mrs. Bangs was exasperated by these inquiries; and to prevent my telling the truth, and to hide her own cruelty, she

said: "He fell down, and hurt himself. He's always getting into mischief," and as she spoke she cast a threatening look at me, as much as to say: "If you contradict me, I'll flog you to death."

Meanwhile she remained, holding the knob of the unclosed door, evidently with the intention of inducing the stranger to take her departure, and casting towards her looks of indignation and impatience. "Come, come; I'm getting ready for dinner, and I've no time to stand here," she said after a few moments' delay, at the same time motioning the visitor out with her finger.

But the other took no heed of her, in her joy at seeing me. I was afraid to show all the gratification I felt at meeting one who had been to me the only mother I ever knew; for by the wicked eye of the woman who governed me, I saw that I should be made to suffer in the future for any offence of the kind I might commit now. My delight was, however, unfeigned; and if I did not show it in act or word, it was none the less visible in my looks.

"Ah!" said the visitor, regarding me with a fond compassionate glance, and addressing Mrs. Bangs, who, finding her efforts at summary ejection unsuccessful, now closed the door, and advanced towards us, "he was just like one of my own. I suckled him from the first month, and you can't tell how bad I felt when they took him away."

"What's your name?" asked Mrs. Bangs. "We don't like people to come here, unless we know who they are."

"Well, you needn't be afraid of me," was the reply; "my name's Kate Wilkins; my husband's name's Richard Wilkins, and we live at Green, ten miles off, where we've lived for twenty years and more. I didn't know till about six weeks ago where Washington had gone to, so I came to see him, and I hope, Mrs. Bangs, it's no offence."

"Oh! no," said the latter, with a change of manner, "walk in," and she opened the door of the small front-parlor, and invited Kate to be seated. I remained standing, for I knew that such a piece of presumption as sitting down in the parlor would have aroused the wrath of my great enemy.

"Washington, you may go into the kitchen," said Mrs.

Bangs, in a tone of command. I was reluctant to leave, but I knew that my disfigured countenance reminded the old lady that she had just told a falsehood, and that she was afraid that the visitor would make some further remark about the accident which might bring out the truth; and knowing the penalty of disobedience, I considered it imprudent to linger.

“Oh! let him stay,” said my foster-mother.

“Mrs. Wilkins,” replied the other with an air of offended dignity, “I’m mistress in this house.” Then turning to me, she said: “Come back, sir, when you’ve brushed your hair, and made yourself tidy.”

I returned, and found Kate giving Mrs. Bangs what that lady subsequently called a bit of my history.

“The poor child,” said Kate, “he was given to me one night when I was bringing home some clothes for the wash. There was a gentleman and a little girl in a carriage, and after passing me, it stopped at the road-side. Just then I turned a corner with my basket, and I hadn’t gone many steps when some one touched my shoulder from behind, and looking round, almost frightened to death—for I had not heard a foot-step—I saw the gentleman standing by, and breathing quick, as if he’d been running.

“‘My good lady,’ said he, for he was very polite, ‘don’t be alarmed; I only want to ask you a question.’

“‘Sir, how you frightened me,’ said I, ‘what is it?’

“‘Are you a married woman?’ he said.

“‘That’s a nice question,’ said I; ‘if it’s any satisfaction to you, I am.’

“‘Well, listen to me,’ he said, ‘and put down your basket while I talk to you.’

“I began to feel frightened again, for there was nobody passing at that time.

“‘It’s just this,’ the gentleman went on to say, ‘a child, only a few days old, was left at my door, in a carpet bag, and I want to find some one to take care of it. I don’t like to send it to the police-station, for I think by its being left at my door that it may be the child of some one who knows me, and expects me to do something for it.’

“‘Well, that’s a nice way to get rid of a child, at any rate,’

said I, 'and I'm sorry for it; but I've two of my own to nurse, and if a woman takes care of her own children, it's enough for her to do.'

" 'Yes, I know all that,' said the gentleman, 'but I'll pay you for your trouble. I'll give you so much a week, and a hundred dollars now.'

" I looked up in astonishment. Says I: 'Well, Sir, you're very good to the child, but I don't know as my husband would like me to take it.'

" 'Then he argued ~~with~~ me a long time, and said: 'Oh! yes, he would. Wait here and I'll bring you the child, and you can carry it home in the basket, and the hundred dollars with it.'

" 'Then where shall I find you, Sir, for the weekly payments, after that's used?' said I.

" 'Oh! that's all right,' said he, 'I'll give you my name and address,' and he tore a leaf out of his pocket-book, and wrote his name and address on it.

" 'There,' said he, as he gave it to me, 'how much a week will satisfy you—four dollars?'

" 'Yes; I think that'll be enough,' said I, surprised at his liberality, for four dollars was as much as my husband had been making a week for a long time before that.

" 'Well then,' said he, 'I'll pay you four dollars a week, half-yearly in advance, and this'—putting a hundred dollars in gold into my hand—'is the first payment.'

" I said, 'Thank you, Sir; you're very kind,' and jingled the money together, to find out by the sound whether it was all good, for I hadn't had so much in my life before. 'Well,' said I, 'if I do this I take on myself a great risk, but perhaps you wouldn't mind coming and seeing my husband about it.'

" 'Yes, yes,' said he, 'at some other time; I'm in a hurry now.'

" 'I hardly like to do it,' said I.

" 'Well, wait here a minute, said he, and he ran back to where I guess the carriage was waiting, in the other road. When he returned, the little girl was with him, carrying the child. He took it from her, and told her to go back to the carriage, and then gave it to me.

" 'Why, you've got the child with you?' said I.

“‘Yes,’ said he; ‘I brought it right away.’

“I asked him if it had been fed lately, and he told me it had. I said, is it healthy? and he said it was perfectly. ‘It’s a boy,’ said I, ‘and something like yourself,’ but he didn’t seem to like my saying that, and to tell the truth I couldn’t see well, it was so dark; but I had my suspicions that it was his own child, and I wanted to sound him about it. ‘Well, you’ll come with me home, and see my husband?’

“‘Not now,’ said he, ‘not now, but tell me your name, and where you live.’

“So I told him: Kate Wilkins, Cottage Road, Green.

“‘Well,’ said he, ‘Mrs. Wilkins, take my word for it, it’s all right.’

“‘Are you going to leave this shawl,’ said I, meaning the one the child was wrapped in.

“‘Yes,’ said he, ‘everything. Now promise me, Mrs. Wilkins, to take good care of it.’

“I promised that I would, and then he shook me by the hand, said ‘good night,’ and ran back to the carriage.”

“What a singular circumstance!” exclaimed Mrs. Bangs, and then turning her eyes towards where I stood, smiling at Kate’s recital of the narrative, she remarked: “Look at him; you’ve nothing to laugh at, Washington, I’m sure.”

I agreed with her perfectly.

“What sort of a man was he?” inquired Mrs. Bangs, whose curiosity was fully aroused.

“He was a dark-faced man, about thirty, I should think, with black hair, and his beard shaved off. He was thin, too, and had an eye that seemed to see into my very inside, although it was almost dark.”

At this description I laughed, and was in consequence severely reprimanded.

“He made me take that child, for I felt that I couldn’t help it,” continued Kate.

“That was your father, Washington, I’ll be bound,” remarked Mrs. Bangs. “He wanted to get rid of you.”

Kate resumed her story.

“Well, as I was telling you, I was left alone, with the child in my arms, and how to carry it and the basket, too, was a

puzzle to me. But I did it. I put the child under one arm, and the basket under the other, and carried them both home. My husband was at the door smoking when I got there. "Who's child's that?" said he, as soon as he saw it; and I told him the whole story, and showed him the hundred dollars in gold.

"Light the candle," said he, "and let us have a look at it. That's what I call the hundred dollar prize-baby. I guess, Kate, that tale about the carpet-bag and door-step is all gas. Whoever it belongs to just wanted to get rid of it, and I don't think you'll ever hear any more of the man who gave it to you."

"But he gave me his address," said I.

"How do you know that? he very likely gave you that paper, just to make you take the child off his hands. It mayn't be true. William Edmonds, Forty-seven Tremont-street, Boston," (that was the address written on the paper,) "may be bogus."

"I brought the child up at the breast, just as if it had been my own; and when the first six months was up, I went to Boston, to see if I could find the gentleman, but nobody knew any one of that name at the address he had given me, and I returned home, feeling quite sad about it. And when I told my husband, he said: 'I told you how it would be.' But I nursed the child all the same, and never expected to get another dollar. One morning, about six weeks after this, a letter was brought to me from the post-office, and on opening it, I counted ten ten-dollar bank-bills, with a note saying, 'This is for nursing the child intrusted to Kate Wilkins. Take care of him;' and it was signed William Edmonds, but gave no address. I was overjoyed; and when my husband came home from his work I astonished him, I can tell you. We received a hundred dollars every six months, in the same way, for nearly three years. After that the letters generally had the New-York post-mark, but they never gave an address where the letters came from, but were signed the same as the first. As the child grew up, I asked my husband what name we should give him; and he said, 'As he's got no father, that we know of, we'll call him after the Father of his Country,' so we gave him the name of Washington."

"Ah!" remarked Mrs. Bangs, contemptuously, 'a pretty Washington he'll make.'

"The neighbors called him Washington Wilkins; but my husband said it was best to make his second name Edmonds, after the gentleman who gave him to me."

"That's what we call him now," said Mrs. Bangs.

"Well, after the three years, we never received a dollar, and never heard a word more from Mr. Edmonds; till one day a man came to the cottage and said he wanted to take away the child. 'Who are you? or whom do you come from?' said I. He said he was instructed—that was the word—by Mr. Edmonds. I told him that was the very gentleman I wanted to see, and asked him where I could find him. He said he didn't know. I said I wouldn't let the child go, although we had to keep him for nothing, without I knew where he was going to. He said it was all right, and gave me a card with the name of a lawyer—a Mr. Barker, of Boston—on it, who would be responsible, he said, for what was done. 'Well,' said I, 'Mr. Edmonds owes for three years and-a-half's board.'

"'I know nothing about that,' said the man.

"'But,' said I, 'if you don't I do.'

"He then told me that if I didn't let the child go, I'd have to keep him for nothing, and asked him how much I'd take in satisfaction of the debt. I told him I'd speak to my husband about it before deciding, and just then he came home from his work. The man then said he'd give us a hundred dollars to clear off the debt, and if we didn't take that we'd never get anything, and he'd make us give up the child. He threatened us with all sorts of things if we didn't do what he said. But my husband wouldn't agree, and said he'd go to Boston with the man, and see Mr. Barker, if he'd pay his expenses. He said he would, and they went off together. When my husband came back at night, he said he'd seen Mr. Barker, who told him he'd have to give up the child, but he wouldn't tell him anything about Mr. Edmonds. He said the same man was coming on the next morning with a power of attorney to take the child away, and it would be better for us to take the hundred dollars, and give him a receipt in full. I lay awake and cried till near twelve o'clock that night, I was so sorry at

the thought of losing him; and when the man came next morning, and paid the hundred dollars, and took the receipt and the child, I said I'd go with him, and see where the poor little fellow went to; but the man told me I couldn't go where he was going, and that I'd better stay at home. So I sat down and cried for near an hour, with my bonnet on. That was the last I saw of my foster-child till to-day—poor little fellow. I hope you're taking good care of him, ma'am," and she took me by the hand.

Mrs. Bangs showed a little annoyance at this last remark, which in my presence sounded like a reproach; for although she had subjected me as much as possible to her will, she felt that I considered myself an ill-used boy. Moreover, what right had Kate Wilkins to say she hoped anything of the kind?

"Mind your own business, and I'll mind mine, Mrs. Wilkins," replied Mrs. Bangs tartly. "He's taken a good deal too much care of, living in a house like this for two dollars and a half a week, and the payment of even that not guaranteed. He'll never find another such home after he leaves us."

Kate replied apologetically, but with a look of great compassion for me.

"He's not near as stout as when he left us; has he been sick?" she continued.

"No; he's growing long and lean, but I'm sure it's not for want of plenty to eat. And so he was found in a carpet-bag?" said Mrs. Bangs, anxious to change the subject.

"So the gentleman told me, but I don't believe it. I never did. There's a screw loose, as my husband says, somewhere."

"Don't you want to know how Harry, and Johnny, and little Mary are, Washington?" asked Kate, turning to me, and alluding to her children with whom I had been reared.

"Oh! yes," said I, "how are they?" and in reply Kate told me all that had happened to them since I left.

My foster-mother was still a fine, healthy, young-looking woman. She was a little above the medium height, with a tendency to *embonpoint*, a warm complexion, inclining to brunette, lips ripe and voluptuous, lustrous blue eyes, with

long, dark, drooping, clearly-defined lashes, and hair of the deepest shade of brown. She was a little past her prime, but had a constitution superior to most women of her age and country. She was thirty-two, and looked it. When she smiled, she displayed diamonds in her eyes, rubies on her lips, and pearls in her mouth. These were her only jewels, and they were the gift of nature. The contrast between the two women was remarkable.

“Now that I look at him,” remarked Kate, “it seems as if he was growing more and more like the gentleman who gave him to me. He had that same sort of dark curly hair and hazel-colored eyes, and that long kind of a nose; and his complexion, too, was dark, almost pale. He wasn’t very tall, and I don’t think Washington will be either. He was broad-set like, without much flesh; and it seems as if Washington was taking after him in growing up thin.”

“Depend upon it, it was his father,” said Mrs. Bangs. “He wanted to get rid of him, and was afraid to do any thing with him that might get him into trouble.”

Before going, Kate asked permission to take me back to the cottage, for a few days; but Mrs. Bangs, in view of the loss of my services, peremptorily declined to grant it, saying as an excuse, “We don’t want our names mentioned outside the building. A nice thing indeed it would be for it to be said of us, that we kept a boy found in a carpet-bag, for two dollars and a half a week.”

My foster-mother left me with tears in her eyes, to which my own rained a tribute of affection, and, alas! sorrow that I was no longer hers.

CHAPTER III.

THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET.

The museum was a portion of the building little frequented. It consisted of a nearly square room, lighted from above, with four cases of minerals occupying the centre, and rows of glass

jars of various sizes filling the three tiers of shelves, which stretched along each of the four walls. The jars contained diseased portions of the human body, preserved in spirits of wine, and were carefully sealed at the top, like so many pots of jam. A few dry and varnished skeletons hung by strings in the corners, and collections of skulls were placed near on small stands. A door led from this room into an inner one, called the preparation-room. It was not till I had been nearly two years an inmate of the building that I entered its precincts for the first time. Then I was sent to assist Mr. Flint, the curator. I found him in the act of twisting a pair of human lungs about, with his forceps, on a large, blue willow patterned plate, as if they had been specimens of French cookery that he had just stuck his fork into, preparatory to dining.

A glass jar more than half full of spirits of wine stood on the table near him, from which the lungs in question had just been taken, and where in all probability they had been preserved for the previous ten years. The curator was an emaciated, mummy-faced man, of about forty-five, with piercing black eyes, deeply sunk in the head, and raven hair. He was narrow-shouldered, narrow-chested, and tall, with angular features; and his shrivelled form and bloodless, parchment-colored skin gave him a strange skeleton appearance. He wore a rough black overcoat, on which from time to time, as he removed some scrap of skin or flesh from the lungs, I saw him wipe his pincers, and the scraps were to be counted on his sleeve. Then when he had finished dressing his preparation, to my surprise, he dipped his finger into the old spirit and tasted it.

“What are you doing that for?” said I, making a wry face, and inquisitive to ascertain why he resorted to such a beverage.

“What for?” he replied, again dipping his finger and again applying it to his tongue. “I do that to find out its strength; to see if it will do for second use, or how much fresh spirit I require to add. Here, make yourself useful; go down these stairs, open the door of that closet, and bring out one of those glass jars you’ll see there.”

The stairs led directly from the room. I went down them,

and opened the closet-door, when, to my terror, a skeleton sprang out and gripped me tightly in its embrace. The door at the head of the stairs was simultaneously shut, and I was left a prisoner in the dark. I uttered a wild, piercing cry, and struggled convulsively to tear myself away, but without succeeding. Another frantic effort followed, and I fell, breathless, out of the arms of the grim monster, and struck my head against the foot of the stairs in my fall, just as the skeleton sprang back into the closet, and the door closed with it. I lay moaning and faint, and trembling with fright, on the floor; and it was some moments before I had strength or courage to ascend the stairs, or call for help. After the lapse of a few seconds, that seemed like hours, I made a desperate attempt to escape; and, with a cry of distress, and a dread of being pursued, I clambered up the steps and struck my head against the door, where, unable to open it, I clung, exhausted, with my hands and knees to the stairs. The darkness was impenetrable, and I shuddered at the thought of being clasped in the arms of Death. A creeping sensation came over me, and my blood ran cold. I was unable to account for what had taken place, it was so sudden and unexpected. The end of the world might have arrived, or the spirits of the departed might have come down as avengers of insults suffered in the flesh. The curator might have been carried away by them, and I might be the sport of spectres, innocent as I was, because of being found in such a place. I had known nothing of that skeleton in the closet before, and I vaguely associated it now with the soul of the man whose lungs were on the plate in the next room. The day of judgment seemed to have come at last. Terrified and confused, I imagined every moment that the arms of the skeleton would again be thrown around me; and I started in fear at the apprehension, for I knew not what would follow. I had heard of Satan going about as a roaring lion, and I had heard dreadful stories of children being carried away to no one knew where. My time might have come, now. These were the thoughts that rushed upon me in wild succession, as, half delirious, I gasped for breath. I had all the timidity of a young child, although I was a boy of nearly ten; and, to intensify the horrors of my situation, I had a natural dread of everything bordering

upon the supernatural ; and a ghost story had never failed to inspire me with terror.

The door was suddenly opened, and a loud, demoniacal laugh rang upon my ear. But I was prostrate, and unable to laugh in return. I lay moaning on the stairs, without stirring or saying a word. My fright now gradually turned to rage. I saw that I had been the victim of neither more nor less than a practical joke. But I was too weak at the moment to avenge its cruelty, or yet to express my indignation. I merely darted a look of scorn at the curator, who laughed, and laughed again, and then went to work upon the lungs, which he began to handle like a sponge. I had an old cent in my pocket, the only money I possessed, and, as David chose a stone and a sling to make war upon Goliath, so I selected this single coin to revenge myself on the curator. When my strength had sufficiently returned, I raised myself up, and, without saying a word, threw the cent with deliberate aim and all the force I could give it, at the head of the object of my wrath. It struck him on the right temple, inflicting a deep, sharp cut, and his face instantly became more deathly and ghastly than before ; and his teeth ground. With an expression of intense pain and ferocity, he flung the lungs, which he held in his hands, straight into my face ; and then was about to hurl something more formidable in the same direction, when he sank fainting on to a chair beside him, and the next moment he was unconscious. My hostility was disarmed in a moment, and I felt very sorry for what I had done. I wiped my face with my sleeve, and went to his assistance : and very soon I had the satisfaction of seeing him revive. But his recovery led to a nearly fatal result to myself ; for no sooner did he regain his consciousness, than he seized me by the arms, and held me as in a vice. “Now,” said he, “I’ll fix you ;” and he dragged me to the open window, which looked into a steep yard with a flagged bottom. The fall from the window was more than a hundred feet, but he hurled me out of it with all his strength, and then sank down exhausted. By this time my cries had been heard by Mr. Bangs, who came running from the library to see what was the matter, and who found me clinging to the window-sill with both hands. Another moment and

I should have been hurled into eternity—for I was just relaxing my hold, when a providential hand seized me by the hair of the head, and the collar of my jacket, and pulled me into the room.

The double shock to my nervous system was almost too much for me, and I cried with hysterical violence. At this juncture Mrs. Bangs entered the room, and when she heard that I had cut the curator's forehead, she said, "Come, march into the kitchen, Sir;" and, after chasing me across the room, succeeded in laying hold of the back of my neck, and leading me away captive to her own bed-room, where she commanded me to undress, and then tied me naked to the bed-post, and commenced flogging me with a cane with all her might; and she flogged me till the blood trickled down my back and limbs, and the whole surface of my body was covered with bruises. In vain I cried for mercy, and screamed and writhed in agony. She was not to be diverted from her avowed purpose of flogging me within an inch of my life; and when her task of cruelty was completed, she surveyed my lacerated form with a look of triumph and exhaustion, and said: "You'll remember that as long as you live." Then she drove me to my own room, and threw my clothes after me, saying, "There, don't let me see your face again, this day;" after which she turned the key in the door, and left me alone in my misery. I stood sobbing there, naked, for hours—although it was in the month of November, and the room was without fire—for my wounds were too raw and painful to make my clothes bearable; and if I could have endured the pain of lying down, the sheets of my bed would have clung to me like plasters; and as these were changed only once every two or three months, if I had stained them with my blood the wrath of my tormentor would have been again aroused.

It was not till after dark that the key was turned in the lock, and the door again opened. Then I recognized the form of Mrs. Bangs, with a basin in her hand. I was lying naked on the bare boards, shivering with cold, and incapable of effort. I had stood till I could stand no longer, and my knees knocked together, and every limb grew stiff and nearly useless. Then I lay down, as I hoped, to die.

"Here, take this, you young wretch, and learn how to behave yourself in future," spoke the hated voice; and she placed the basin on the mantel-piece. But I did not heed her; only a groan of pain escaped me.

"Yes, you may lie there, groaning, as long as you like. It will be good riddance of bad rubbish, if you never get up again. We shall be very glad, the Lord knows. We shan't be at the expense of burying you, at any rate. The work-house will have to do that; and that's where you ought to be, now, instead of robbing a poor widow and her son, by living here when there's no one to pay for your board. We haven't had a dollar for your keep for more than six months, and we never expect to see another cent. Whoever you belong to wont own you, and leaves you to impose on other people; and yet you give yourself airs, you, a dirty, hateful chit of a child, found on a door-step; you, taken out of a carpet-bag; you, you young devil; I'll be the death of you, yet."

She disappeared, and I heard the key again turned in the lock, as the door shut; and I was left alone in the thickening darkness. With the stolid indifference to life which I felt, I had no appetite for food, no wish to nourish my persecuted body; and although I had eaten no food that day, but a scanty breakfast of oatmeal porridge, I allowed the contents of the basin to remain untouched, untasted. I thought over the unfortunate accident of my birth, and what Mrs. Bangs had so often repeated about me, and I wished to heaven that I had never been born. But I was helpless. Regret was useless, tears were unavailing; and in this state of mind and body I crept into my bed, on the floor, and sobbed myself to sleep.

* * * * *

Three years more passed away, and I was still in the stone building—the survivor of probably a greater number of sound floggings and more daily inflicted punishment than any boy of my age. Thank God! I now looked forward to making my escape. I had been whipped too often, by that cruel creature, unworthy the name of woman, who seldom called me by any better name than "a devil incarnate," not to be glad that the time was near at hand when my torture would come to an end—at least in that earthly hell in which I had so long suffered.

During those three years I had continued the drudge I was before. I had endured the same familiar hardships and privations, and been subjected to the same inhuman language and treatment. No galley-slave in the world ever lived under such punishments, or was ever the object of such long-continued brutality as I struggled against, day after day, for the long, weary years in which I breathed the polluted atmosphere of the stone building. I would have exchanged my lot with a negro slave with a cry of delight, and found toiling on the cotton-fields of South-Carolina a very heaven in comparison with the odious condition in which my existence had been made a burthen to me—for the vixen who crushed me had no pity, no compassion, no charity, no religion in her black and withered heart—and yet she wore the mask of heaven to do the work of infamy. If I had cursed her for ever-and-a-day, my wrongs would have justified the curse; but I forgive her—with all my soul I forgive her—as I expect to do all who have injured me; and if I had the power, I would return her good for the bitter evil she wrought me. But I will not shrink from the truth, for the memory of all that I suffered is too deep in me ever to be forgotten. And I was alone in the world. Better women than the one who thus poisoned my life have been burned at the stake, and swung from the gallows; and yet this woman sat in the house of God, and knelt at the sacrament table, and insulted heaven by professing to serve the Lord, while she did the work of the Evil One, and paved her own way to Gehenna.

The curator was not long in making his peace with me. And as he found me useful in the preparation-room and museum, I spent several hours a day with him during the three winter months he was employed in the stone building; and as he was paid for his services by Mr. Bangs, who made a profit by the arrangement, I, by working for Mr. Flint, was in reality serving the Bangs's. It was an outrage to put a boy of my age to labor in such an atmosphere of corruption as always prevailed there, arising from the masses of decomposed matter which filled numerous wash-hand basins, brown stone jars, and large dishes, some of which were entirely uncovered.

The smell made me sick at first, but I gradually became ac-

customed to it. The curator used to share the old jars, plates, dishes and bones, when done with, with Mr. Bangs, and I was the agent deputed to sell them to the junk-dealers, who immediately sold the crockery to thrifty house-wives; while the bones, human though they were, found their way into the ordinary trade-channels. In order to save the bones, when the flesh was not wanted, Mr. Flint used to cut the latter off in pieces, and either throw it into the fire, or through the window into the yard where there was a cesspool into which all the mortal remains in the building were periodically swept or emptied.

The simmering sound and the smell of burning flesh generally accompanied the presence of Mr. Flint, who always carried the smell of the room with him wherever he went; for he appeared to have no change of dress, and he told me that he always threw his coat over his bed, at night, during the winter—a coat invariably covered with scraps of human flesh, and soaked with every variety of pathological pickle.

CHAPTER IV.

A CASE OF SUSPENDED ANIMATION.

I was sitting alone in the kitchen, at about half-past nine o'clock, one evening in April, when I heard a vehicle stop in front of the private door of the stone building. Mr. Bangs had just gone out, and his mother had not returned from a visit to a dying brother. There was a ring of the bell, and I promptly answered it.

“Is Mr. Bangs within?” asked a tall, gaunt man, whom I at once recognised as “Old Tom,” of the Medical College—one whose duty it was to procure subjects from the hospital for the dissecting-room, and who had been known to express himself in strong language when patients did not die fast enough to supply the requirements of the students. He was even said to have remarked to some of the former, whom he considered

dilatory in dying, "I thought we should have had you before this," and considered it something of a joke.

"I've a sack of potatoes here for him," said Tom; "I guess I can leave it all the same," and with the assistance of the driver of the cart I saw standing at the door, he carried it into the house.

The door opening into the yard, which communicated with the rest of the building, was locked, and Mr. Bangs had taken the key with him; so at my suggestion, they laid the sack in a closet, adjoining the kitchen, and then went away. The arrival of a sack of potatoes was a thing that had never happened before in my time, and I wondered what could be the reason of it; and finally concluded that they were a present. But, said I to myself, there must be something besides potatoes in the sack; perhaps a flitch of bacon—who knows? And my mouth began to water at the prospect of high living. There were certain angularities about the sack which potatoes would have been very unlikely to produce; and, therefore, as soon as the men had taken their departure, I proceeded to satisfy my curiosity by feeling its contents from the outside. To my surprise, I found no round substances like potatoes, but something very like a flitch of bacon, or even a whole pig. I began to think that some one had sent Mrs. Bangs a whole hog from the country, but a moment afterwards my hand came in contact with a nose unusually prominent, as I thought, for a pig. Just then the cord with which the mouth of the sack had been fastened, gave way under my efforts to insert my hand, and almost simultaneously I felt a movement of the heavy substance within, which was followed by a slight groan, as human as any thing I had ever heard before; and looking through the opening in the mouth of the sack, I beheld a human face. I was horror-struck, and shrank back in terror. Another groan and another movement of the sack, and I became assured that the body was alive. I moved away into the opposite corner of the kitchen, hesitating what I should do, or where I should go, when I heard another and more violent movement, and peeping stealthily into the closet, from where I stood, I saw the head and face of a man projecting through the mouth of the sack. There was no mistaking the sex, for the face was heavily

bearded and moustached. The mouth opened, and the words, "O LORD JESUS!" were uttered in a faint tremulous tone. The man was conscious, and I felt my courage return, but I was still afraid to approach. In a few moments I heard a struggle, as if he was trying to escape from the sack, and I ran in fear to the private door, fronting on the street. I opened it, and then slowly and noiselessly retraced my steps down the lobby to the kitchen, and peeped in. I saw nothing of the man, but heard a deep, long-drawn sigh, and then a sound as of one gasping for life. I was trembling with agitation, but still anxious to help my unfortunate fellow-being. Having left the street-door open, I felt emboldened and venturesome, like a general who knows that he has a line of retreat open; and I cautiously advanced nearly into the middle of the kitchen, which directly faced the street-door. Then I made an effort to be brave, and called out, "Mister! heigh! you in the closet!" My breath failed me, my heart palpitated, and I felt a strange nervous thrill through my whole system, which was followed by a shudder. I receded, and again advanced, and spoke louder than before. This time it was: "Heigh! what can I do for you? Heigh! you in the closet!" But there was no response. Suddenly I made a desperate effort at resolution, and seizing the candle which burned on the table, I rushed forward with it to the closet. There I was riveted to the spot by the wild eyes of a naked figure crouching near the sack, from which it had just emerged. Never shall I forget that strange, appealing glance—that sad imploring, almost maniacal look. My humanity prompted me to aid the mysterious stranger, but my physical courage was unequal to the shock. So far as I could see, he was short in stature, dark in complexion, and apparently not more than forty years of age. I began to trace hideous lines in the countenance before me, to conjure up a thousand terrors. I recoiled in panic, and overcome with confusion. The candlestick fell from my hand, and I rushed from the kitchen with a cry of alarm, and ran, I knew not why, up the stairs adjoining the door, instead of down the lobby into the street. At the moment, I seemed to be escaping from something that could follow me into the street, but not up the stairs. I soon discovered my

mistake, for the stairs began to creak ; and through the darkness I saw the outline of an approaching figure. Tremblingly I shrunk into my room, and threw myself on the bed. The figure entered, and drew nearer ; and with it my pulse quickened, and my excitement increased. My skin was wet, my extremities cold, my face flushed. Again I shuddered, and uttered a mute prayer to God.

But I had not been many moments there when a thrill of terror shook me from head to foot, at the touch of an icy hand. I cried aloud, and struggled to rise, but the strange man had clutched me by the legs, and I sank back exhausted. At that moment, to my great relief, he commenced sobbing.

“Let me go, let me go !” I shouted, trying to shake him off. “Oh ! leave me ! leave me !”

“Ah ! good executioner, good executioner ! have mercy upon me !” implored the naked figure, in a hoarse, rattling tone.

The words startled me, and I began to think that he had been brought from the lunatic asylum, where he had feigned death, or fallen into a trance. My fortitude, nevertheless, returned with the appeal to me for mercy, and I said timidly : “What can I do for you ? Would you like a drink of water ?”

“Where am I ?” asked the man.

“You’re in the medical building,” I replied.

“Medical building—am I ? What for ? Where is it ? Am I to be dissected ?”

“I don’t know ; I hope not,” said I, feeling afraid that my questioner might suddenly conceive the idea that I was an obstacle to his escape, and make an attempt upon my life.

“Is this Boston ?”

“Yes.”

“Is there any one about—any one watching ?”

“There will be in a minute or two,” I replied, in dread of an attack.

“Don’t betray me—will you ?” said he, in apparent anxiety to communicate a secret, and get me to aid him in his plans.

“No,” I replied, “I’ll not tell any body.

Then there came the startling whisper; “*I’m the man that was hanged!*”

“When? this afternoon?” I ejaculated in amazement, for I knew that a pirate had been executed at two o’clock at the county jail, and that Mr. Bangs had been present as a spectator.

“I don’t know when, but it can’t be long since. Can you get me some clothes to put on without exposing me? If I’m found alive, they’ll hang me over again, sure.”

I hardly knew how to act at this juncture, between dread of the man in such a desperate position, and of both Mr. and Mrs. Bangs, if I complied with the request. I would, I thought, not only be severely flogged, but run the risk of being handed over to the police, and possibly hanged myself, if I gave away any of the librarian’s old clothes.

“Strike a light,” said the stranger, in the tone of one who was determined to carry out his purpose.

“I’ll go down stairs and get one,” said I, and I darted out of the room, and down-stairs into the kitchen, and very soon returned with a lighted candle, which I placed on the top of a set of drawers in the bed-room, near the door.

“Where are the clothes?” asked the man, whose neck I now perceived to be swollen and excoriated.

“Mr. Bangs’s clothes are in the other room—no one’s there.”

The man took up the candle, and followed in the direction in which I pointed with a sort of spasmodic movement. I trembled for the consequences, and shivered at the sight. I watched his tottering steps, but did not dare to follow. Slowly I descended the stairs to the lobby, and then, like Lot’s wife, turned to look back, and stood listening and waiting as still and as motionless, and almost as white as a pillar—of salt.

Ten minutes had hardly elapsed when I heard a shuffling noise at the head of the stairs, and then the sound of descending footsteps. A shadow at the same time was cast upon the wall, and in another moment I beheld the strange figure, candle in hand, coming towards me. The wild, black, anxious eyes looked down upon me wistfully, and a hollow voice asked: “Is the turnkey at the door?”

"No one's at the door," I said, "do you want to go out?"

"Yes," and the tottering steps came nearer and nearer.

The figure was no longer naked, but clothed in the ill-fitting garments of Mr. Bangs, from head to foot, commencing with an old brown cap, and ending with a pair of worn-out shoes.

"Can I go?" inquired the dark-faced culprit, as we reached the foot of the stairs, and at the instant he caught sight of the open door, and with the exclamation, "God bless you, my boy; you've saved me," he rushed forward to the doorway. The next moment two bodies met in collision, and I heard the angry voice of a startled woman. Mrs. Bangs and the pirate had met.

"Oh! let me go!" exclaimed the man, in a tone of frenzy; and pushing past the old lady, he disappeared in terror down the street, while she leant against the door-post, with her hand against her chest, drawing short breaths and uttering, "*Oh! oh! oh!*" as if her last hour had at length come.

"What did that man want?" she demanded, when she had sufficiently recovered to speak. "He wanted to rob the building, I'm sure. How came you to let him in? you young wretch! I'll give it to you."

I saw that I was in trouble. But I determined to tell the truth, and I narrated the entire circumstance, to the intense horror and indignation of Mrs. Bangs.

"You're telling me a lie, I know you are," said she.

In vain I pointed out to her the sack in which the man had been brought, and referred her to "Old Tom," for corroboration of the leading fact. She was insensible to conviction.

"I'll send for the police as soon as ever Mr. Bangs comes home, and have you sent to jail, you young, lying, thieving ragamuffin," was her threat. "They'll flog the truth out of you there," she continued. "Who's to pay us, I'd like to know, for all them good clothes that you've given to that robber?"

"I didn't give them," I pleaded; "he took them himself, because he hadn't any of his own."

"You didn't, eh?" and she ran at me savagely, and struck me a violent blow on the head with a broom-stick.

"Who is he?" she demanded, with a fresh burst of passion, and holding the broom-stick still in her hand.

"He's the man who was hanged," I replied, sobbing.

"You will provoke me to murder you, will you?" and the old woman's blows with the stick began to descend upon me, like a shower of hail-stones. I ran yelling about the house, pursued by my persecutor, from whom I was unable to escape. Finally she succeeded in knocking me down, and then she jumped on me, and kicked me in the face.

"Here!" she exclaimed, nearly out of breath, "we've been keeping you for sixteen months, without a penny, and you do nothing but rob us—that's the gratitude you show, eh?" and she struck me again.

It was not long before Mr. Bangs tapped at the door with his stick, and his mother opened it on the instant.

"Well, Robert," she said, with a look of alarm, "the house has been robbed."

Mr. Bangs opened his eyes wide, and raised his hands in wonder. Entering the kitchen, however, and seeing that the furniture was still there, he regained his usual composure.

"Where was Washington?" he inquired.

"Law! man; he did it," and she proceeded to tell how she was nearly knocked down by a man who ran out of the house as she came in, and what a pack of lies I had told her about him.

"I'm surprised that 'Old Tom' should have brought the body here; he was to have taken it to the dissecting-room," remarked Mr. Bangs, evidently crediting my story.

"He said he'd call in the morning to see you about it," spoke I.

"But at any rate it couldn't have been the man who was hanged," he continued; "I can't understand it. I'd better go and see 'Old Tom,' right away, and learn what he has to say. Washington, I think, had better come with me."

His mother allowed him to go, but made him promise to return by half-past eleven.

After a sharp walk of a quarter of an hour, we came to a tall tenement-house, in a narrow street, and then groped our way up to the second floor. Here Mr. Bangs knocked, and his summons was answered by the individual of whom he was in quest.

“What was in the sack you left for me to-night?”

“Oh, Sir!” said “Old Tom,” “I’m sorry you’ve been put to the trouble to come here, because I did that. I was coming in the morning to take it over to the college. You know it was the body of Jones, the pirate, as was hanged this morning; and I had to take it out of the prison to-night, or it would have been buried. I hadn’t a notion I should have been so late in getting it away from there, and I didn’t think I should find the college locked up when I got there, and no one to answer the bell. The janitor had gone out, I guess, so I thought the best thing I could do was to bring the body to you to lie in the building till morning. I thought I should have found you in, but you’d gone out, and locked up every thing, so I’d no place to leave it, but in the kitchen-closet. I hope you’re not vexed at it, Sir.”

“No; but the man’s gone!” exclaimed Mr. Bangs.

“Old Tom’s” eyebrows went up, and his eyes seemed to project out of their sockets.

“Gone! Sir. Who took him?”

“He got out of the sack and dressed himself,” said I.

A smile of incredulity and wonder passed over Tom’s face.

“The man that I brought was dead—he’d been hanged. It couldn’t have been him. How could a dead man get up and dress himself? If this was the first of April, I’d think you were fooling me.”

I told him the whole story, but he was incredulous to the last.

“I’ll go with you,” said he, “and see if I can’t find him. If it’s as you say, it’s the strangest thing I ever heard of in all my life.”

Tom returned with us, and was shown the empty sack, and at his own request was allowed to search all the rooms and passages of the house.

“That’s the sack,” said he, “but the devil’s taken the man. It’s the first time I ever knew a corpse spirited away like that. The fellow’s soul, I can tell you, has got up a conspiracy with his body. Hanging him was only a joke,” and he left the building in a quandary.

Months elapsed, but nothing was heard of the man who had

been hanged. It was put down by the Faculty as a miraculous case of recovery, and by Mrs. Bangs as only a trick to rob the house, and she never ceased to remind me that I was a confederate in the theft of the librarian's old clothes ; but the evidence, she admitted, was not strong enough against me to justify a prosecution, and therefore her threat of handing me over to the police was never carried into execution.

CHAPTER V.

THE FATAL STRUGGLE.

Mr. Flint, the curator, and Mr. Bangs, the librarian, quarrelled about money matters. The former maintained that he was entitled to seventy-five dollars more than the other was willing to allow ; and in consequence of this disagreement, the curator refused to continue his labors any further, and went abroad denouncing him as a cheat, and uttering threats.

He called at the building repeatedly to demand what he considered his due, and was invariably violent in his language.

On one memorable Saturday, when Mr. Bangs was eating his homely dinner, at the kitchen table, the bell of the hall-door rang, and I ran to open it, and admitted Mr. Flint.

"Is Mr. Bangs in the library?"

"No ; he's eating his dinner."

"Tell him I want to see him."

I delivered the message, and Mr. Bangs returned the reply, that he was engaged, and had no time to see him.

"No time, eh !" repeated the curator, grinding his teeth.

"Is Mrs. Bangs with him?"

"No ; she's gone to market."

"Then I'll go and have a talk with him," and he started forward with gleaming eyes to compel an interview.

"I've come for that seventy-five dollars," he said, with an air of great determination, when he arrived in the presence of Mr. Bangs.

"I don't want to have anything more to say to you about that. I've done all that I intend to do," replied the latter, indignant at the intrusion.

High words arose, in the midst of which the curator seized the librarian by the coat-collar, and forced him against the kitchen wall. A struggle ensued, and both men grabbed at each other's throats, and fell together.

"Give me the poker!" shouted Mr. Bangs, trying to overpower his adversary by choking him. The other made a desperate effort to escape from his clutches, but before he succeeded I had obeyed the librarian's call. To my intense horror, no sooner had he grasped the poker with his left hand, while he held on to the throat with his right, than he plunged it deep into the socket of one of the curator's eyes, and then with brutal fierceness he withdrew it, and ran it into the other. The struggle was over that very minute, and when the librarian released his grasp of the throat there was not a movement to indicate that the curator was alive.

The face of Mr. Bangs was livid with excitement and rage, and his agitation was so great that his knees knocked together when he attempted to stand; and overcome with a violent tremor, he was compelled to sit down.

Half-an-hour elapsed, and still the body showed no signs of returning animation. "I think he's dead," I said; and I stood in fear of being implicated in the crime of murder. There was a ring of the hall-door bell, and I ran to open it and admitted a member of the library. Then I returned to the kitchen, and found Mr. Bangs leaning over the corpse, and putting his ear to the heart, at the same time that he felt the wrist.

There was no pulse.

The private door-bell rang.

"Go and see who that is," said he, "and let no one in but Mrs. Bangs."

I went into the parlor, and peeping through the window, saw no one but her at the door. I opened it, and she flew at me for not admitting her sooner; and walking straight into the kitchen, entered the presence of death.

"God bless my soul and body, what's the matter, now?" she exclaimed. "I never go out but what something goes wrong before I get back."

"Hush!" and her son tried to awe her into silence.

She saw the figure on the floor, but it was some minutes before she discovered that it was the dead body of Mr. Flint, and that her son was his murderer.

Mr. Bangs was in great distress, and consulted his mother as to the course it would be best to pursue.

"It will never do to let it be known. It might go hard with me," he reasoned; "and at the best we'd have to leave the building."

"What made you let him into the kitchen?" demanded Mrs. Bangs.

"How could I help it, mother—Washington let him in, and he followed him in spite of my message?"

"Ah! that young fiend is at the bottom of every thing that's bad," and she cast a threatening look at me. "If," she continued, "he breathes a word about this to any living soul, I'll break every bone in his body."

The consoling words had no sooner escaped her lips than she said: "Well, Robert, what are you going to do? It won't do to leave the dead body here, lying right in my way."

"Well, what am I to do?" asked Mr. Bangs, perplexed and irresolute.

"Do what you like," said his mother, "only take it into the laboratory, or somewhere out of my sight."

"Give me something for a cover, then," said the son—"a sheet will do;" and when this was thrown loosely over the corpse, I assisted him to carry it into the laboratory. The latter was a dark room, opening into the passage connecting the main building with that part of it occupied by the Bangs's. It was on the ground-floor, and communicated with the steep back-yard into which one of the windows of the preparation-room opened.

There I left Mr. Bangs alone with the dead man, and returned to the kitchen, to wash up the "dinner things." Late in the afternoon he came to his mother, and told her to take care of the building while he went down-town. He had not been gone more than an hour and a half when he returned, with a cart, containing a cask weighing probably between sixty and seventy pounds, marked "Potash," which the driver delivered at the pri-

vate entrance of the building, and Mr. Bangs with his own hands afterwards rolled to the laboratory-door. There he drew from his pocket a key, and unlocked it, and the man and the cask entered the room together. The corpse was still lying on the floor, gradually becoming stiff and cold.

There was a large iron boiler, with a fire-place underneath, fixed against the wall in one corner of the room nearest the yard. It was used by the woman who cleaned the building for warming the water for washing and scrubbing purposes. Into this Mr. Bangs put the whole contents of the cask, and then turned the tap above, and allowed it to run till the boiler was half-full: after which he made a fire.

“Remember, Washington, you must not say a word about Mr. Flint having been here to-day, to a living soul.”

“No; I’ll not say a word,” was my reply.

After he had cut and dragged the clothes off his victim, he said: “Take hold of his feet, now, I want to lift him up.” I obeyed, reluctantly; and Mr. Bangs raised the head and shoulders, till they rested against the edge of the boiler. Then he tried to twist the inflexible trunk into a crescent shape, and bend the limbs at the joints so that he could put the whole mass into the boiler at once; but the body was too rigid to allow of this. He seemed puzzled for a moment whether to cut up the corpse, to make it fit in, or leave the legs projecting out; but he quickly decided upon the latter, and to my inexpressible horror pushed the body, head foremost, into the solution, which was now warm. Having stuffed the dead man’s clothes, and the staves of the potash-cask into the fire, he left the caustic to do its work. The legs projecting out of the boiling solution, presented a sickening spectacle, from which I was glad to escape.

Mr. Bangs left the room, locking the door and carrying the key with him. He returned in half-an-hour, and fed the fire; and the solution having already softened the flesh, he found no difficulty in pushing the whole of the body into the boiler.

I was surprised at the calmness which had followed his recent agitation, and still more at the cold cruelty of an observation that fell from his lips, in the midst of a scene so full of horror. Who could imagine any thing more heartless and

flippant at such a time, than : "These are melting moments, as the sugar said to the tea!" But Mr. Bangs uttered it in allusion to the dissolving body of the man he had murdered.

In three hours more he entered the room again, candle in hand, and found all that was mortal of the curator dissolved, and nothing remaining in the boiler but the solution, which had changed to a brown, saponaceous liquid. Not a particle of bone or muscle, flesh or skin ; not a tooth or finger-nail remained. The whole man had melted away.

He lost no time in carrying the fluid—a jug full at a time—to the mouth of the cesspool in the yard, down which he poured it ; and very soon the boiler was empty.

After this he returned to the kitchen, where he found his mother crying, and immediately his courage forsook him, and he appeared overcome with remorse. He now regretted the disposition he had made of the body ; and I could see that he feared my turning State's evidence against him. As for myself, I was miserable and conscience-stricken in the extreme, for the share I had been made to take in the dreadful deed. I felt in peril of my life, and utterly wretched from this time forward, and resolved to make my escape from the oppressive thralldom in which I had been so long held as soon as possible. The thought of being dissolved in potash, and no trace of my existence left, haunted me night and day ; and I shuddered at my own imaginings.

I had no ties, no motives of interest to bind me to any particular spot on earth ; and when all the world was equally the same to me, why should I linger where my bread was so dearly paid for ? Mr. Barker, the lawyer who had entrusted me to the care of Mrs. Bangs, had long discontinued his payments for my board, and had given notice to her that his client, the very mysterious gentleman of the door-step and the carpet-bag, was no longer in America, and had left no provision for my support ; and that consequently she was at liberty to act according to her discretion with regard to keeping me or turning me out of doors, I had been taunted and threatened with this, daily, since the notice came.

It is true that after the murder I was less abused than be-

fore, and Mr. Bangs in particular endeavored to smooth my way; but young as I was, I likened the change to the calm which often precedes the earthquake or the storm.

I now lay awake at night, weaving plans for the future. I could read and write; and while assisting Mr. Bangs in the library, I had picked up that sort of information and experience which gives a boy confidence in himself. I could read print, even when I left the cottage of Kate Wilkins—for although the wife of a journeyman carpenter, she taught me my first spelling lessons; and my earliest efforts with the pen were made under her guidance. Since coming to the Bangs's I had not neglected to seek after improvement; and notwithstanding the disadvantage of never having been to school, I flattered myself that I knew a thing or two more than many boys who had. I had been schooled in adversity and hardship, and it would be strange indeed if I found the world harder than my life had been in the stone building.

Meanwhile I heard of no inquiries after the curator. He was an unmarried man, with no one to care whether he lived or died; and when he failed to return as usual to his lodgings, the probability is that his landlady thought he had disappeared like some of her former lodgers, because of the debt he owed her. Thus, silently and mysteriously, do many among us pass away to that bourne whence no traveller returns.

CHAPTER VI.

I BEGIN THE WORLD ON MY OWN ACCOUNT.

The dread of sharing the fate of the curator increased upon me with the lapse of time. The idea of being dissolved in the large boiler, like a lump of sugar in a cup of tea, haunted me day and night; and once I awoke in terror from a dream in which I felt myself plunged, head foremost, into a steaming solution of potash. I knew that my knowledge of the murder made my existence dangerous to the librarian, and I harbored

the belief that the time might come, when in order to guard against the possibility of my divulging his crime, he would not hesitate to repeat it. Imagine therefore my feelings!

"If you ever breathe a word of that," threatened Mrs. Bangs, "I'll tear you limb from limb; I'll make cat's meat of you; you'll never live to tell another tale"—and she flew at me with a frying-pan, by way of making a deep impression upon me, physically and mentally.

"Oh, I won't! I won't!" I exclaimed in fear and trepidation, at the same time endeavoring to escape from the assault; but the next moment I staggered under a blow that made me lean against the kitchen-door for support, while the floor seemed to heave beneath me, and the walls to swim round. My first vague impression, after partially recovering from the shock, was that my skull was fractured. My head ached violently where it had been struck; and, added to extreme dimness of vision, all the colors of the rainbow danced before my eyes. A frightful faintness and a fear of being struck again overcame me, and I sank involuntarily to the ground, where I lay prostrate and shuddering. I was slightly aroused from a lethargy that was stealing over me by a violent kick, which was repeated. I thereupon made a feeble but desperate attempt to rise, in which, however, I failed. After that I became unconscious; and when next restored to reason, I was lying in the narrow yard leading to the main building, with my clothes, face and hair dripping wet, a bucket of water having been thrown into my face by Mrs. Bangs in order to hasten my recovery. I was light-headed and weak, and unable to walk steadily for a few days after this; and I looked forward with melancholy pleasure to the hospitable grave. I felt as if the top of my head had been crushed in, and that congestion of the brain would soon terminate my sufferings. But I nevertheless recovered my health gradually, as I had done from previous attacks of the kind—for since my first entry into the building, my cranium had seldom been without bumps not developed by nature or education, and unknown to the phrenologist; and it was a common thing for Mrs. Bangs to say, as she struck me on the head with a poker or broomstick, "There's another lump for you, you wretch"—meaning one of the afore-mentioned bumps.

It was not many weeks after this, and on a sunny morning in September, that I left the stone-building on an errand from which I never returned, doubtless leaving both Mr. and Mrs. Bangs in a quandary as to the cause of my unexpected disappearance. Making my way to East-Boston, without a single regret at the course I was about to adopt, I went from ship to ship seeking a place as cabin boy, for the sake of going to sea—that great refuge of dissatisfied youth. I had walked many hours, and spoken to many people, before I came to a schooner loading for New-York, to the master of which I addressed myself. I told him that I was in search of my father, and that I believed he was in New-York. I asked him to take me on board, and after some hesitation and questioning, he assented.

I was thereupon sent forward to assist in the galley, and was otherwise made generally useful about the vessel, which sailed on the day after I joined her.

I could imagine the indignation which Mrs. Bangs displayed as the day went by and I failed to come back, and I know that I enjoyed the idea of her vexation at my taking French leave at last. Astronomically I was no longer a fixed star, but a comet, and I was disposed to be erratic.

I pictured her to myself in a state of fury, thus talking to the librarian: "That young wretch has got into some mischief and been taken up by the police, depend on it. Oh! he's the worst torment ever any poor soul had in a house. I shouldn't wonder, now, if he goes and tells all about that potash business. What a fool you were, Robert—what a fool you were, I say—to let that boy know any thing about it. Why, how could you help it, do you say? What need was there of getting him to help you to do what you did with the body? Yes, I shouldn't wonder if he goes and turns State's evidence against us, and we were both hung. Put on your hat, man, and go to the station-house and see if he's there; what's the use of standing there, staring. I wish we'd poisoned the young fiend, and got him out of the way before this. And I'll do it, too, if ever he comes back here—and I hope to the Lord he may."

I was eager to leave the schooner after her arrival at the Empire City, and so escape the rude hardships of a life for which I was physically unfitted. I felt glad when I found my-

self in the busy streets, which I fondly hoped would lead me to a better home than I had found in Boston ; and I walked cheerfully along, hoping that something would turn up to my advantage, or manna be rained down to me from heaven. Meanwhile I knew not how I should get my next meal, or where I should lay my head on the coming night, and my only trust was in Providence. As the day advanced and I became tired and hungry, the enthusiasm I had felt on stepping ashore gradually diminished, and hope gave way to dejection as the sun sank grandly in the west, and the sky darkened at the approach of night. The sidewalks were filled with home-returning multitudes, and so were the cars and omnibuses. But for me there was no such place as home. I was alone upon the tide of life, alas!—adrift on an inhospitable world. To be alone and friendless, and penniless and houseless, in a great city, is to be alone indeed. Civilization is cruel—heartless ; and Christian charity, that rarest of virtues, can hardly be said to be one of its component parts. Where could I turn for relief ? To have asked for food or shelter would have been to beg, and to have earned for myself the contempt which all beggars have to suffer. But I was too proud to beg ; I would rather have gone into a baker's shop, and stolen a crust, feeling that I was justified by necessity, than to have appealed to the cold charity of a world which had only bequeathed to me a life of misery. God would have been my judge, speaking through my conscience in such a case, and I should have been acquitted. But where Man is the accuser, God and conscience are too often ignored.

Why, I asked, should I have been born to suffer, when millions around me lived in perennial ease and luxury ? Why, in a country whose written Constitution declares that all men are born free and equal, should I have met with so cruel a fate ? Where was the much-vaunted equality of republicans ? Was I not a republican, and was I a greater sinner than my more fortunate neighbors ? I failed to penetrate the mystery of society. But it seemed to me, that if I had been born a North-American Indian, instead of a citizen of the United States of America, it would have been better for me. The primeval wilderness would then have furnished all that my necessities required, and

without price. Nature would have supplied my simple wants, and to take would not have been to steal. Mammon would not have been the god which my people worshipped; money would not have been the *summum bonum* of their existence, the *ultima thule* of all their efforts; and petty larceny, embezzlement, forgery, and all the other crimes to which money has given rise, would have been happily unknown.

Strange reflections, it may be thought, for a boy hardly fourteen! But be it remembered, that though young in years, I was old in sad experience. I had been cradled in adversity, schooled in misery, and fed upon contumely and bitterness that had filled my heart, and now overflowed in gall. And these were only thoughts—thoughts that flitted vaguely through an understanding quickened by pain, and ripened by early familiarity with hardship. I could not, then, have reduced them to the language I now employ; but what I now say is what I then thought.

Wearily I walked the streets, reflecting upon the past and speculating upon the future. From the Past I was glad to escape; and yet from the Future, I shrank timidly and sorrowfully, so dismal did it appear. Although schooled so deeply in a certain kind of suffering, and inured to privation, I was almost a stranger to rude contact with the outer world. I had hitherto led a life of comparative seclusion, but now I was entering upon a new experience, and one not likely to be less painful than the other, only differing in kind. I was not callous; my sensibilities were not blunted; I was not lost to a sense of shame; nay, I was far more acutely sensitive than most boys of my age. It would, perhaps, have been better for me if my nervous organization had been less fine, and if nature, which had cast my lot in thorny places, had rendered me less vulnerable to the stings and arrows of outrageous fortune. My susceptibility aggravated the effect of my misfortunes, and intensified my grief.

Seeing no prospect of food or shelter ashore, I retraced my steps reluctantly to the schooner, which lay alongside a pier in the East River; but I was told that there was no room for me there, and the master was absent, ashore, for the night. Some crackers were given to me, however, and with these I walked

away, I knew not whither. Like Benjamin Franklin, with his penny-roll, I ate my frugal meal as I passed along; and if it was too plentifully moistened by my tears, it was because I could not help it. For a moment I felt that it would have been preferable for me to have continued to brave the terrors of Mrs. Bangs, than thus voluntarily to have thrown myself upon the mercy of an unmerciful world—out of the frying-pan into the fire as it were—but it was only for a moment; the dread of ever meeting her again overcame me, and made me willing to endure death itself rather than return to the scourge of her presence. Kate Williams was too far away now, for me to hope for any succor from her; and she had children enough of her own to keep, without such an extra burthen as myself to prey upon her larder. But why think of going back? I suddenly asked myself, surprised at my own reflections. I ran away to sea, to begin a career of my own—to obtain my release from an oppressive yoke; aye, even young as I was, to eat the bread of independence. The world must be hard and heartless, indeed, if it would not afford me thus much.

Moody, meditative, melancholy, silent, I continued walking in the direction of Broadway, and finally found myself in a small, squalid square, where five streets met; and in the centre of this was a small, triangular space, enclosed by a wooden paling. There was a look of extreme wretchedness and poverty about the dilapidated houses, full of gaps and rents, that overlooked each other on both sides of the narrow, dismal streets, and the ragged and apparently destitute creatures, male and female, that lounged and glided about in the bright moonlight, which was in harmony with my own sad feelings and condition. The atmosphere was freighted with bad odors, and the entire aspect of both place and people would have been forbidding to those less desolate than myself who could have chosen their company and location; but to me, the great avenues and the streets where the residences of the wealthy were, had proved a desert, without a single oasis to cheer me on the way. Here I at least found an outer and visible type of my own inner wretchedness. Want stared me in the face, and here it evidently reigned supreme.

“What’s the name of this place?” I asked of a tall, ema-

ciated man, who, with his hands in his pockets, went shivering past me. His haggard face, bent and shrivelled form, uncertain gait, battered hat, black frock-coat, buttoned but full of holes, and shoes through which the naked feet were plainly visible, made me forget my own misery and turn to him with pitying eye and sympathetic soul.

"This?" said he, apparently amazed at such a question, "this is the Five Points. Were you never here before?"

"No," I replied; "never."

"What brought you here, then? Do you want to see any body?"

"No," I answered ingenuously; "I don't know any body. Do you live here?"

It was a relief to me to speak to another human being, after communing so long with myself; and I felt that I could talk to this man, and tell him of my position, and ask his advice. Being poor myself, I was more likely to find a sympathetic listener in this poverty-stricken, miserable and probably despised member of the community, than in any well-to-do citizen I might have met elsewhere.

My expectation was not disappointed. The man heard of my being houseless and a stranger, and the chords of his heart were touched—for he was not one of those cold, conventional professors of charity who, before relieving distress, institute careful inquiries into the moral condition and religious beliefs of those who solicit their aid; as if houselessness and starvation had no right to be relieved, unless accompanied by certificates of good character. Out upon such a miserable pretence of philanthropy; such mock charity is cruel and insulting.

Give me the man or woman of wide human sympathies and generous feelings, whose charity springs from a noble impulse, and is free from ostentation. If I want to do good, let me seek those who have tenanted our jails and hospitals, and those whose career is one of crime and misfortune, and let me put them in the way of making an honest living. That, indeed, would be charity. Who would choose to live by burglary, in preference to following an honest calling? No one! Necessity is the mother of crime, as well as of invention.

"Come with me," said the man, (whom I began to think

possessed a noble type of human character ;) "I live in the Old Brewery over the way."

The building referred to, as seen in the moon-light, was a tall, gloomy ruin. Poverty and wretchedness evidently had their abode there, for many of the windows were patched and broken, and huge gaps in them were stuffed with rags and paper; and other signs were not wanting to tell of the misery that lay concealed within its neglected walls. A few figures, like heaps of rags, crouched and lounged in front of it: and so hopeless did they appear, that I forgot my own destitution in contemplating theirs. A couple of pigs were wallowing in the opposite gutter, and seemed to dispute possession with the people. Suddenly the sound of a woman's screams, and of angry voices, came from an adjoining house.

"What's that?" I asked, in alarm.

"Oh! it's only a drunken fray—a fight in the liquor-store," replied my companion; and we entered a dark, narrow passage. Rude shouts of laughter rang upon my ear, and a glimmering light peeped through a crack in a door-way in the wall.

"Where does this lead to?" I asked timidly.

"Oh! don't be afraid. It's 'Murderers' Alley;' but nobody's going to hurt you."

I held back for a moment, but recovering my courage, I continued groping till I came to a turning in it.

"Where are we now?" I inquired.

"This is the 'Den of Thieves,' answered my conductor, who now began to ascend a creaking stair-way.

"I'm afraid to go up there," said I.

"Oh! come on; don't be afraid," continued the man, "I live up here."

I followed him with suspicion, stumbling here and there on the broken and irregular stairs, which were lighted only by a faint flicker through a crevice in some opening in the brick-work of the wall.

Finally we came to the head of the topmost flight of steps, where the atmosphere was less oppressive to the lungs than below, and the darkness less painful to the eyes. Passing along a narrow, winding passage, I came to a spot where

the naked beams and rafters were so low that my companion had to stoop as he groped his way, and a wide rent in the roof, imperfectly patched with rubbish, admitted a welcome stream of moon-light; but the damp atmosphere, and wet and rotten boards, reminded me that wind and rain had equally access to the rude and repulsive interior. Bah! what a place to live in. Disease held high carnival here, and the air was laden with pestilence. Was life in such an abode, I asked myself, worth having? The grave, in comparison, seemed hospitable indeed. My companion, still stooping, disappeared through a doorway. "Mary, how are you?" I heard him say, addressing some one within; but there was no response. The man repeated his inquiry, but still there came no reply. The room was in darkness, and the speaker appeared to be groping about in search of a match, for very soon there was a flicker, and then the light died out again. Another match was lighted, and the cell-like apartment dimly revealed its cheerless walls. A wick, floating in a pot of grease, when lighted, answered the purpose of a candle, but served only to partially relieve the gloom. There was no window or fireplace in the room, only a small iron grating near the rafters; and cleanliness was a virtue evidently much neglected by its inmates.

"How are you, Mary?" repeated the man, going to a corner where a human form, enveloped in rags, lay on the bare floor.

The rags remained motionless, and no voice responded.

"My wife's sick; come in," he said, turning to me as I stood near the doorway, half-afraid to venture in.

He stooped, and spoke again, and listened, and drew the rags aside, and then gently raised the body. He seemed to tremble under its unelastic weight, and releasing his hold of it, he ejaculated: "My God! she's dead!" Then, without looking upward, he fell on his knees and buried his face in the bosom of the corpse; and I heard nothing for many minutes but dull, stifled sobs, followed by heavy breathing.

In the presence of this great grief I felt my own vanish, and stood looking on meekly and in awe.

The man at length rose, and a more pitiable object it would have been difficult to find. Hunger, disease and anguish could

hardly have been more legibly depicted in the human countenance.

I held his sufferings sacred, and had no words to utter when he turned round and faced me. My human sympathies were too acute to prevent my sharing his sorrow, but I felt that I was wholly helpless to alleviate his misery, and this pained me.

"When did she die?" I asked timidly.

"Die! she died since I went out," was the reply; "without a soul here to say 'good-by' to, or a mouthful of food to eat. But she was past that. God bless her. Poverty—starvation killed her, poor thing; and I shall follow her very soon."

"What was the matter with her?" I inquired.

"You ask more than I can tell you, my boy. I could get no doctor to come here to see her; but she'd been in a consumption a long time, and I think it must have been inflammation of the lungs that carried her off."

"I'd better go," said I. "Can I do any thing for you?"

"Oh! don't go—don't leave me, to-night. I brought some bread home in my pocket, and we can share it here;" and with an imploring look he solicited me to remain.

I felt that it would have been cruel to refuse, so I agreed to share my companion's misery. I saw him endeavor to eat some of the bread, which he placed on a wooden bench for our mutual use; but he failed in the attempt, and without saying a word, he lay down on the floor not far from the corpse, and there remained apparently exhausted. Having eaten some of the bread, and drank some water which I found in a jug in the room, I followed his example—overcome by sleep and fatigue, and utterly unable to bear up any longer. Just then the flickering light expired, and impenetrable darkness succeeded.

When I awoke, early on the next morning, I saw by the feeble light which found its way into the room through the open door-way, that my companion of the previous evening had moved into the corner where the corpse lay; and rising, I walked to the spot and bent down to listen, but no sound of breathing met my ear. The conviction that the man was dead as well as the woman, instantly took possession of me, and I shrank back. There he was, holding his dead wife in his rigid

embrace. The one body felt to my touch as cold and stiff as the other; and both were equally lifeless. Here then, was death, locked in the arms of death, a solemn spectacle for mortal eye. Here was the last melancholy act of the great drama, which these two people had been struggling to perform since the dawn of their existence; here was the Omega of a marriage, whose Alpha had perhaps been full of joy and promise. I sickened at the sight—for death is not always lovely to behold—and with a feeling of panic rushed from the room.

CHAPTER VII.

I FOLLOW THE FASHION, AND GO TO EUROPE.

With a feeling of dread and excitement, I hurried along the narrow passages and down the intricate stairway of the Old Brewery, till I came to the street. Then I began to breathe freely; but the melancholy spectacle from which I had just retreated, haunted me like a terrible dream. Death locked in the arms of death! I shuddered at the thought.

The neighborhood was already astir; and by the gray of the sky and the slanting rays of the sun, I judged it to be about six o'clock. I stood for a few moments irresolute as to what I should do next, fearing that if I divulged my knowledge of the deaths I should get into fresh trouble. The latter feeling prevailed, and I walked away with a sense of relief at leaving behind me a spot, the features of which had by this time become repulsive to me.

I had lost hope of doing any good for myself in New-York, and in my desolation I longed to flee away. Therefore the desire to go to sea—my only refuge—again took possession of me, and I directed my footsteps towards the forest of masts that towered skyward from the wooden piers of the East River. I knew that in seeking a life on the ocean wave I was courting hardship, and voluntarily making myself a galley-slave. But ashore the prospect appeared little better than afloat; and the

evils with which I had already to contend, left me in little fear of those others to which in my extremity I might fly. Youth has every where to suffer; and the life of boys up to eighteen is one of perpetual humiliation. It seemed to me that there was no way of escaping the martyrdom common to my age, sex and poverty, and whether I suffered a little more or less than my fellows, after I had suffered so much already, was a matter of little consequence to me—and certainly of none whatever to the world.

Therefore see me a successful candidate for the floggings which every boy who goes to sea as a sailor inevitably gets. The ship-master, who responded to my appeal by consenting to take me, was a hard, gutta-percha-colored man, with a face ploughed with wrinkles that ran like rivers across a continent. He had a voice as hoarse as the tones usually heard through a speaking-trumpet, and an eye remarkably like what I imagined a vulture's to be. The lower part of one of his cheeks was thrown somewhat out of shape by what I discovered to be an enormous plug of tobacco; and from his stern, distorted mouth there rained a shower of tobacco-juice. He was six feet high, but excessively slop-built, gaunt, awkward and stooping. He had feet considerably more than a foot long, and nearly half as broad—which he doubtless found a capital steadying apparatus in a gale of wind; but nature, which had been so lavish of her abundance to him in this respect, as if in a sudden fit of economy, had blessed him only with a very small head, and a forehead so low that when he laughed—and he did laugh sometimes like a hyena, with the scream of a parrot as an accompaniment—he could hardly be said to have any forehead whatever. He had no perceptible throat, but a good deal of black hair, which projected like a bowsprit between the sharp points of a collar so open in front that it seemed to have been made to reach from ear to ear only. His teeth were hollowed out, and broken here and there like rocks, and of a burnt-sienna color; and his nose was deeply indented across the bridge, thus greatly disfiguring a countenance which had never any pretensions to beauty. He was a Kentuckian by birth, and unfortunately addicted to strong language as well as strong waters—his oaths extending to indefinite length, and his potations to an equally

indefinite quantity. When he raised his voice, in command, he spoke with the force of a sledge-hammer on an anvil; and if he observed the slightest hesitation or incompetency in carrying his orders into execution, he followed them up by throwing belaying-pins or other harmless missiles, at the objects of his virtuous indignation. His garments hung about him with an appearance of perfect looseness; and his striped pantaloons were the envy of the negro cook, Sambo, who rejoiced in the title of "doctor," and held perpetual carnival in the galley. A great man on his own deck, like all sea-captains, was Captain Whittlestick of the barque "Skimmer of the Seas," bound for Liverpool with passengers and cargo.

During the voyage I was kicked and cuffed unmercifully; but I endured it heroically, for it was part of my creed never to say die. Nevertheless when the ship reached port, I was glad to leave her and go in search of better fortune ashore.

It was a dark November day when I landed. The atmosphere was foggy, and the streets smoky, muddy, and full of noise, bustle, sailors, orange-girls, and Irish emigrants. When I came to the Clarence Dock gate, I saw a crowd of these last—the men clad in damp ragged frieze, damaged hats, perforated stockings, knee-breeches and brogans, and all armed with the invariable shillaly supporting a bundle across the shoulder; while the women, with tanned and freckled faces, were bonnetless and playful. They had just arrived by an Irish steamer, on the deck of which they had spent the night, in company with numerous sheep, pigs, horses, and horned cattle.

Loaded wagons and bawling carters moved about in seemingly inextricable confusion; stray cattle ran to and fro, and were as rapidly pursued and overtaken by gangs of drovers; dense volumes of smoke ascended from half-a-dozen steamers in the dock; bells were ringing for the outward-bound to get aboard; hackney-cars threaded their way in all directions; and passengers and badged porters rushed about wildly.

Jingling lorries, laden with produce from all parts of the globe, moved past me up and down the Waterloo Road. For miles, north and south of me, extended the great docks of the great sea-gate of England. Into these cotton poured from the

wide valley of the Mississippi, the flowery shores of the Amazon, the irrigated soil of Egypt, the burning plains of Hindostan; wool from thirty different countries scattered round the temperate zones of the earth; hides from the wide tracts of South-America, and the high lands of India; provisions from the pastures of Ohio; grain from the banks of the St. Lawrence, the Delaware, the Loire, the Elbe, the Vistula, the Danube, and the Don; oil from the olive-woods of Italy, the palm-groves of Africa, the plains of Belgium, the floating ice of Newfoundland, and the depths of the Arctic seas; copper and silver ore to be smelted with the coal of St. Helen's, from Mexico, Chili and Peru; coffee from Ceylon and Costa Rica; sugar from Georgia, the Carolinas, Mauritius, and the East and West Indies; rice from Alabama and Patna; jute from Bengal; mahogany from Honduras; rosewood from Brazil; guano from Peru; spices from the Malaccas; tobacco from Maryland; timber from the forests of New Brunswick and Canada; and a thousand other things from nearly as many different places.

As I advanced, huge boards and walls covered with flaming red and yellow placards, and foot-long letters, met my view. Fast-sailing vessels seemed to be departing to all parts of the world, at all times; and the array of these was embarrassing if not bewildering. Was it wonderful that the first of these walls I came to seemed a kind of Pisgah from whence I gained a gratuitous sight of the whole world? I gazed from the placards to the ships, and forgetting the hardships I had suffered on my voyage across, longed to take the wings of another vessel to another clime. I read a romance in each of those wandering palaces of oak and iron, which every time they crossed the world, bore a crowd of men "precious as Cæsar and his fortunes" to those near him. How inviting I thought those steamers, with their polished decks and twilight cabins; and the sun-light dimpling the binnacle, and dancing merrily on the water, I can well remember.

I was without a dollar, a friend, or a home—but not without hope; and I walked until I was weary and foot-sore. Then with the approach of night my spirits drooped.

It was a little past eight o'clock when I found myself in a

narrow, smoky street, half lost and hidden puzzle-like in a labyrinth of other equally dirty, narrow, and irregular thoroughfares, all filled alike with the same suffocating atmosphere. It was not far from the Nelson Dock. The inscription, "Good Dry Lodgings," rudely painted on a piece of board hanging by a cord from a nail, over a deep cellar made accessible by a steep flight of muddy and broken steps, caught my wandering eye. I was enabled to read it by a faint glimmer of light, which shone down upon it from a thin dip-candle burning near the window of the first floor above. I had been looking about me for a lodging for hours, so I lingered for a moment in front of this promised asylum, and gazed down the steep steps leading from the street to the dingy hive below, passing in their downward flight a window patched up with pieces of newspaper, and stuffed with rags and other substances equally opposed to the admission of day-light—if indeed the murkiness which pervaded that locality during any one of the twenty-four hours could be justly so called. I was still looking, in the endeavor to see into the cellar through the half-open door, when the figure of a man without a coat advanced and opened the door wide.

"Is it a lodgin' you want, my boy?" he asked in a true Tipperary key. It was the oasis in the wilderness—the first words that had been addressed to me since my arrival.

All the money I had was a British shilling and a few cent pieces, so it behooved me to practise economy; and the cellar was the kind of hotel best suited to my pocket, wretched as it evidently was.

I answered the question in the affirmative.

"Och then, my jewil, it's glad I'll be to have you; come down."

I accepted the invitation.

"Faith, I'm the model lodgin'-house-keeper, and it's myself can make you as comfortable as any man in Liverpool—and only charge ye fourpence a night for that same."

I found myself in the cellar, with firelight gleaming through the darkness.

"Threepence to him; shure he's only a boy," put in a weather-beaten woman who sat on something invisible—which

afterwards turned out to be a lump of coal, near the fire—smoking a short black pipe—and who doubtless thought, judging by the space I would occupy, that a fourth less than the price charged for an adult would be only a fair deduction. Then turning to me, kindly, she asked: “Won’t threepence do ye better than fourpence?”

“It will suit my pocket just as well,” I replied.

“Then threepence is all you’ll have to pay,” said the man; “but is it alone you are entirely?”—and he eyed me with curiosity.

“Entirely.”

“Shure it’s an English boy yon are?” remarked the woman inquiringly; and as she spoke, she withdrew from her mouth the short black pipe she had been smoking, and deposited it on a sort of mantel-piece jutting from the wall, above the hobless fire-place.

“You’ve guessed wrong this time,” said I; “I’m a Yankee.”

“Arrah! now are you, indade? And is it from Ameriky you come?”

I nodded in the affirmative.

“Faith, then you’re the whitest Yankee I’ve seen yet. Shure I thought they were all black in Ameriky.”

I forgave her ignorance, and enlightened her to the contrary.

“And how old might you be?”

“Fourteen.”

“Bedad it’s a fine boy of his age he is,” remarked the man; which was acquiesced in by a nod from the woman, who still sat on the lump of coal with her face resting on her hand, and her elbow doing exactly the same on her knee.

Since my entrance I had been sitting, in company with the proprietor, at one end of a small narrow block of wood, supported by a variety of legs, which, not being of a uniform length, subjected the seat they supported to sudden lurches. As if by instinct, the man jumped up on hearing the sound of voices outside, thus causing the stool or form, or whatever else it might be called, to lose its equilibrium, and perform an eccentric movement which threw me with a slide to the floor.

"Och, there you are," cried the woman in high glee, as she saw me go; "it's the legs of that stool that are bewitched."

A group consisting of three bonnetless women—one of whom carried a child slung on her back—and four men, all wearing an unmistakably Irish aspect, here entered the dimly-lighted apartment.

"Faith, an it's glad to see ye we are," said the wife of the model lodging-house-keeper; and she rose and offered her seat to one of her countrywomen.

"There's ne'er a candle here, Mike," said she, as she searched in one corner of the cellar.

"It's myself that has them," responded her husband; and he produced one of the thinnest of tallow candles from an excavation in the wall, near the ceiling—which latter spanned the vault-like apartment at an elevation of five feet from the brick floor, carpeted with a long accumulation of mud.

This was lighted; and having been wedged into a turnip-like candle-stick, was allowed to blaze in undisturbed solemnity on the mantel-piece, where lay the before-mentioned pipe of high color. The room was now in a state of comparative illumination. All within gathered round the fire, save myself; and I, already tired and exhausted, asked for my bed, and lay down on a pallet of straw.

I was at rest; and before mid-night the bodies of the four men, the three women, the child, and the model lodging-house-keeper and his beloved spouse, lay beside me—covering the entire floor. And thus we passed the night. Within, darkness, misery, and a poisoned atmosphere; without, the storm howled wildly through the streets. By-and-by the rain descended as if blown out of the clouds; and the bleak element was heard fitfully sighing in courts and alleys, and whistling plaintive tunes down long chimneys. It was solemn, yea, fearful to listen to. On sped the hours of darkness; and the rain, which had drifted before the wind, and even found its way to where I lay, at length subsided.

The breeze, which held high carnival above, did not descend to the cellar. I could hear a feeble sob now and again in the chimney—but the latter was so long and so intricate in its

windings through the tall narrow house, that the wind was choked in its struggle to penetrate it, and only succeeded in sweeping down the soot. Thus passed the night, which brought morning and misery to me.

CHAPTER VIII.

A HARD ROAD TO TRAVEL.

Daybreak cast its sickly light, and revealed the cold gray sky, with dark clouds hurrying over the stormy scene; while slates and chimney-pots, dislodged from many a roof, lay in fragments about the streets. The river Mersey was swollen and troubled, and shrill was the voice of the gale as it sang through the naked rigging of the ships at anchor.

Hungry and penniless, I went out upon the tide of life. I was disheartened, objectless, forlorn; and my previous fortitude seemed to have deserted me. What charm had the world for me?—I asked myself. Civilization had conferred no boon upon me, and fortune had persecuted me from my birth. I wept over my own utter desolation, and wished that I had been born a savage, or died in my cradle. Gravely reflecting, with Famine gnawing at my vitals, and my heart aching with grief, I walked through the here busy and there tranquil streets of the great seaport of England, till I was weary and foot-sore. Ah! well I remember that bitter sense of despondency, which, young as I was, stole over me in that foreign land, as the day advanced.

Evening began to drape the town with shadows, and crowds of men engaged in commerce moved homewards—many towards the piers and landing-stage to catch the next steamer for Birkenhead, Woodside, New Brighton or Seacombe, on the opposite and Cheshire side of the river, where steamers were crossing and re-crossing like arrows darting from both sides of the Mersey. The landing-stage, which swung below St. George's pier-head—like a floating battery seen through a magnifying lens—was crowded with a human throng; and

tempted by curiosity, I crossed one of the bridges leading to it, and found myself a unit among the multitude, with no soul to commune with save my own among that living tide. For all save myself there seemed to be some haven of rest and safety—some retreat from the inhospitable sea of life. I was as much alone in that busy careless crowd, as is the Sphinx in the desert; and in my solitude I sat down on one of the public benches. But I had not been long there, when I was suddenly disturbed by a tap from the stick of a policeman, who, in a gruff voice, and with a threatening manner, said: "Come, come; move on there." Somewhat startled, I hurried in silence before the cruel eyes and formidable staff of the pursuing officer of justice, and speedily regained the pier.

Twilight crept slowly on, and so did I. Faint with hunger and fatigue, I passed along the Prince's Dock Quay; and tempted by some Indian-corn which had leaked out of one of a pile of sacks, I stooped to pick up a few grains, when I was ruthlessly collared, and chastised with a heavy switch by the watchman in charge, who afterwards handed me over to the police stationed at the nearest gate, who in their turn conveyed me, in company with two other boys younger than myself, to the nearest bridewell, and I was thrust into a cold damp cell, and they with me. Inured to the hardships of poverty, and the punishments which are the certain reward of habitual crime, these boys had become hardened, callous, and reckless of consequences; and regarding me as a novice in theft, they gave me nothing but their jeers and contempt. I found them, therefore, but sorry companions; for even my stifled sobs were met with epithets of derision.

With night, the wind that had lulled recovered its strength, and dark and wild floated the heavy drapery of clouds through the celestial waste—while the sultana of the heavens shone out at intervals with a pale, tremulous light; and the stars, faint and small, seemed to flicker in the distance. But since my entry into the cell, the sky had been hidden from my view; and the darkness would have been complete, but for the uncertain light which struggled through a wire grating in the door. Yet I could still hear the sighing, wailing, panting sound of the many-tongued breeze, which went tearing its way

through and over the chimney-stacks and streets and crowded alleys of Liverpool, and whistling through the rigging of the ships at anchor, with the same vehemence as on the preceding night.

As the hours sped on, the key was more than once turned in the lock of the cell-door, and other prisoners were admitted. For me there was no such balm as sleep, for my wretched companions made the night hideous with their cries and imprecations. The Scriptural proverb, "There is no peace for the wicked," here seemed to have a practical illustration. Mere imprisonment I could have endured cheerfully, had I been alone; and even in that miserable dungeon, I could have found comfort and solace within my own soul; but the associations of my incarceration wounded my spirit, and made me sad indeed. In that sickening atmosphere of physical and moral corruption, I suffered torture; but alas! there was no retreat, and I had either to endure or to die. I could find no sympathy in those, who, from childhood, had been steeped in the dregs of wickedness, and nurtured in the bed of poverty—the great source of all human evil and degradation.

Morning cast a feeble ray through the wire-screened window of the cell; and at eight o'clock, after being served with a scanty breakfast of bread and water, the prisoners were ordered out, handcuffed, and marched through the streets, in double column, to the head police-office near the Exchange, under the escort of policemen.

Notwithstanding that I considered myself innocent of having committed any crime, I was ashamed of my position; and with lowered head and downcast eyes, shrank from the gaze of passers-by. For the first time in my life I felt really degraded, and wished that the houses would fall down and bury me in their ruins.

The stipendiary magistrate took his seat in court at ten o'clock, and one by one the prisoners were brought up from the cells below and placed at the bar. My turn came at last; and faint and trembling I was led to judgment. The charge was, stealing Indian-corn.

"He was caught in the act, your worship," said the policeman who had taken me into custody.

“I seed that lad, your worship, loitering on the landing-stage yesterday afternoon,” said another officer of justice; and looking up, I saw the same savage countenance which had scowled at me before.

“These boys,” said the magistrate, “are becoming quite a pest, and I shall make an example of every one that is brought before me. Therefore, Washington Edmonds, I order you to be imprisoned in the House of Correction for the term of seven days, and there to be twice privately whipped.”

Upon hearing this I burst into tears, feeling myself the victim of a cruel and undeserved punishment; but the next moment I was pushed out of the dock, into the lobby, and re-conducted at a later hour to the van, which lodged me in Kirkdale jail.

I will not give the painful details of my prison-life, but pass on to the day of my release, when I again found myself a desolate wanderer on the streets of Liverpool. My great anxiety now was to procure employment—for without this, I clearly saw that there was no escaping either a jail or a poor-house. I therefore made application at several shops for a place as errand-boy, but failed in my object. Again I thought of going to sea; and walked along the line of docks, inquiring here and there as I went, for a ship that would take me. But my efforts were without success. Then my thoughts reverted to the “Skimmer of the Seas,” and Captain Whittlestick. If I could do no better, I would go to the latter and entreat him to take me with him on the return voyage.

Pursuing my way southward, I came to a broad and extensive quay, covered with logs of timber, spars, and piles of deals. A sign told me that this was the Brunswick Dock; and seeing a crowd of men hopping over the logs, and circulating among the deals, I approached, and found that it was a timber sale by auction. Very soon, afterwards, the whole of these—and I with them—entered a shed, where a long table was spread with what seemed to me a magnificent dinner. Every body commenced eating without ceremony; and I thought that I could not do a more sensible thing than join the party, although I had just suffered seven days’ imprisonment for picking up from the ground a handful of spilt corn. Very soon the champagne

began to flow, and the bottled stout to foam; and finding glasses conveniently at hand, I helped myself *sans ceremonie* to both—although I had never tasted either before in my life. I thought the change from prison fare rather agreeable, and that my luck was decidedly improving. I did not know at the time that these refreshments were provided by the auctioneer, for the buyers attending the sale, but had an intuitive belief that those who partook would have nothing to pay. In the midst of my enjoyment of the good things provided, a man abruptly pulled me from the table by my jacket-collar, and hurried me from the shed, with the parting exclamation: “Let me catch you here again!” I was decidedly disconcerted by this incident, but was glad it was no worse; and notwithstanding the man’s expressed desire to let him catch me there again, I resolved if possible not to give him the chance.

I had not walked far when I began to feel the effects of my unaccustomed meal, in a degree of physical torpidity and mental obfuscation I had never before experienced. Moreover, I had been kept awake by my fellow-prisoners during the greater part of each night of my imprisonment, and I was weary. Yielding therefore to inclination, I crept into a secluded nook formed by several piles of spruce battens; and lying down there at sun-set awoke not till sun-rise on the next day.

CHAPTER IX.

I DEFY THE MUTINEERS.

Having passed the night in the manner described, I sauntered northward, till I came to the dock where the “Skimmer of the Seas” lay berthed when I left her. To my joy, she was still there. The captain had not yet come down to the ship, but I waited for his appearance, and then told him my wish to return on board. It was enough for me that he consented. A few days afterwards, the vessel, with four hundred passengers and a full cargo, glided into the Mersey, and anchored to await a fair wind. It came; round flew the windlass; the anchor

was weighed, and away she sped before a ten-knot breeze. The long shores and tall steeples of Liverpool receded from the view, and I for one gave a joyous welcome to the sea.

We had been twenty-eight days out, during the last week of which we encountered rough, foggy weather, that prevented any observations from being taken, and forced us to sail by dead reckoning. The captain was uncertain about the exactness of his calculations of the ship's latitude and longitude, but still kept on a good spread of canvas, trusting to the look-out and his own luck, for the safety of the vessel.

It was near midnight, and very dark and squally, and the ship was laboring in a heavy sea. The breeze whistled through the shrouds, and impelled her swiftly onward through the foaming element; while the atmosphere was cold and hazy, and not a star was to be seen. Suddenly the fore-watch cried out, "Ship's light ahead, Sir;" and the mate turned to the helmsman, "Luff, luff, two points," and sent a man aloft to observe its course.

"It looks like land ahead," was the report of the latter, when he descended.

The captain had by this time reached the deck, and shouted, "Hard on the wheel!" to which the helmsman uttered, in sonorous distinctness, the stereotyped reply, "Ay, ay, Sir." The ship suddenly came about, and filled on the other tack, when it was discovered that she was already among the breakers.

"All hands brace the after-yards," yelled Whittlestick. "She'll go off," he added to the officer of the watch, as he saw the order promptly executed, its object being to allow her to pull off-shore gradually. The head-yards were steered as long as possible, to prevent her paying off too fast; the after-sails were kept up, and then the spanker was set; but directly afterwards she filled away, and fell broadside on the rocks. She struck very easy on her larboard side, but quickly began to throb heavily. The whole of the after-sail was, however, kept on, with a view to letting her haul off, if the tide made; but it happened to be then about high water, and the attempt failed. The ship was wrecked. The sails were now clewed up; but the crew became mutinous, and refused to furl them.

From the time of her first striking, the excitement among the passengers was intense, and the cries of terror-stricken women rose above the roar of the breakers, the chorus of the seamen, and the hoarse commands of the ship's officers. Every one felt that his life was in danger, and many gave way to panic, and rushed wildly to-and-fro; while some attempted to jump overboard, but were restrained by their less frantic fellows.

The light which had been seen was that of a light-house, on the Newfoundland coast, but it was now no longer visible, being hidden by an intervening headland, or rocky cliff.

The darkness added to the confusion, and the vessel soon began to fill and break up, while the surging roar of the ocean, and the voices of those on board blended in a melancholy wail, and the angry billows broke over the fated ship, and then leapt shoreward into foam, sporting as it were with our misery. Morning broke; alas! how wild, how bleak! There lay the rock-bound coast, rugged and high, snow-capped and desolate, between which and the wreck, the heavy waves dashed loudly, lashing in their frenzy the sea-worn barrier, wallowing in their wrath, and then receding with a gurgling, rushing sound, while all around was foaming.

The larboard quarter-boat was lowered, with a view to passing a line to the beach; but the heavy wind smote so wildly, as if urging the ocean to vent its wrath still more, that the boat was caught up, and dashed to pieces on the rocks. Four boats more remained on board; so there was even yet a hope of rescue, although four hundred and fifty hearts palpitated on her decks, as she lay broadside on in the surf.

The coast near us seemed unapproachable by land, and the light-house lay at a distance of three or four miles. There appeared to be no help for those on board, but their own unwearied exertions.

The starboard quarter-boat was next lowered, with some line coiled into her, and the chief mate on board. A line was at the same time made fast to it from the ship; but the undertow was running so strong that it narrowly escaped destruction, and was quickly hauled back again. Finally, however, the same officer, with four of the crew, and five passengers, succeeded in getting ashore; but then the lamentable discovery was made, that they were unable to return.

The consternation on board increased, and the ship was fast breaking up. Men, women, and children shouted, and cried, and groaned, and prayed, and embraced each other in dismay, and the hard-fixed look of despair was visible among many. Some had already madly flung themselves overboard, as if anxious to anticipate their doom, and others, among them women, with infants in their arms, in the vain hope of reaching the shore alive, instead of which they only stained the breakers with their blood. Several I saw looking sadly and moodily over the bulwarks, with a blank stare, as if trying to read their fate in the troubled waters. Some smiled grimly, with clenched hands and set teeth; others sobbed hysterically; and only a few displayed that calmness in the face of death, which is the best possession of the soldier on the field of battle.

The wind lulled as the day waned, but a heavy sea still came rolling inshore, and there was still no promise of those who had gone ashore being enabled to return to the wreck. By this time all order and discipline were at an end, and, to add to the horrors of our situation, the mutinous crew broke into the spirit-room, and drank to intoxication. They then began to plunder the passengers, and ransack the cabin, and the clamor which arose I shall never forget. Sounds of discord and strife succeeded to groans of anguish and piteous petitions to Heaven, and the last hours of the many were devoted to riot and tumult by the few, and that ship became a pandemonium.

The recollection of that terrible scene is as vivid in my mind now as it ever was, and ever will continue to be, till death and I claim companionship in dust. The crew, maddened by drink and laden with booty, had no sooner secured their spoils than they commenced quarrelling among themselves. The captain at this juncture interfered, when one of the men drew a knife on him, at the same time uttering a fearful threat. "Drop that!" said the other, advancing towards him in an attitude of defence. The fellow for the moment desisted, but turning on one side, and stooping, he took up two belaying-pins, and threw them at him. He then advanced, with the knife grasped in his hand. The captain upon this drew a pocket-pistol, of which he had three on his person, and fired at his assailant. But the weapon snapped without exploding, and at that

moment the man with the knife made a rush at his intended victim, who skillfully evaded him, and then firing another pistol, shot him on the spot, just as he was in the act of making a thrust with the steel, and he made an involuntary spring into the air, and fell back lifeless, with the knife still tightly grasped in his hand.

The rest of the crew now gathered round the captain threateningly, and one of them struck him with a short flat shovel, taken from the galley, while another attacked him with a grid-iron, which broke in the encounter. In the midst of this, the third pistol missed fire, and he was helpless to defend himself. The ruffians then rushed upon and beat him with belaying-pins, and such like, and kicked him without mercy.

At this moment, without any other thought than that of defending a fallen man against the murderous assault of the mutineers, I forced my way through the noisy crowd, and, throwing myself across the prostrate body, exclaimed: "There! you have killed the captain, now kill me."

I was dauntless, and my courage partially disarmed them; and, lawless and cruel though they were, they evidently admired my pluck. Some of them, however, pointed their pistols, which they had obtained from the arm-chest, but none of them exploded, although snapped several times, a circumstance due to their having been a long time loaded; while a few still vented their wrath in kicks, and an occasional shower of missiles. Regardless of the danger to which I exposed myself, however, I still guarded the body of the unfortunate captain, and bravely bore the brunt of my situation.

A diversion now occurred, which withdrew the attention of the mutineers to themselves; for a quarrel arose among them respecting the division of the spoils. They quickly drew their knives, and the fight soon became deadly and exciting. It was a hand-to-hand combat, in which bloodshed and death were terribly rife. The scene became one of drunken tumult and strife, and slaughtered bodies lay strewn about the decks. Meanwhile, I had dragged the object of my care to a spot near the cabin gangway, for shelter from the rushing masses of people.

Night again spread her sombre mantle, and the scene of the

fierce and sanguinary contest was hushed to comparative repose. Not more than fifty of the original number now survived. The rest had been swept off the wreck, or drowned in their efforts to reach the shore, or fallen victims to cold, hunger, and accident, or been killed in the struggle with the mutineers. Of the crew only eleven remained alive after the struggle ended, and these immediately took possession of their plunder, and embarked in the last of the boats, in which they put off for the shore; but one sweep of revengeful waters dashed it to pieces on the rocks, and the ruffians perished with it.

The third morning after the wreck dawned, and meanwhile the weather had been intensely cold, and the wind continued high—whistling loudly through the vessel's broken timbers, as she lay a fragment of her former self in the boiling surf, while a mantle of newly-fallen snow gave an appearance of Arctic grandeur to the scene. The boat in which the chief mate and others went ashore had disappeared from the beach, having probably been carried away by the tide, and we could see nothing of those who had landed. But in their stead the rude and solitary shore, which would otherwise have been sublime in its desolation, presented only too many painful evidences of the disaster. Beyond the surf-line it was fringed with mangled bodies, among which the hungry seals were not idle, and remnants of bales, boxes, and other cargo.

The fore-part of the ship, as far as the after-cabin and quarter-deck, had been entirely carried away, and the remaining portion of the hull, it was evident, would soon share the fate of the rest.

Notwithstanding the vicinity of the light-house, it was not till now that the first signs of assistance appeared to us from the shore; and I saw several men, who afterwards proved to be wreckers, hungrily seeking what they might devour, observing our position on the beach. A thrill of joy ran through my veins, and I rushed with as much speed as my starving body and the difficulties of the way would permit, to the berth in which the still surviving captain lay, and informed him of the presence of the people on the coast; but the delirium under which he had labored, since beaten by the mutineers, prevented his making any manifestation of feeling on the oc-

casion. He appeared unable to comprehend what I said, and merely muttered a few incoherent words.

The berth alluded to was an upper one, situated in a small cabin astern, and in that part of the wreck highest out of water, but even there more than three feet of water washed with a plashing sound over the floor. In the top berths of the two next state-rooms, three women and an infant child were huddled, and here the water rose to the depth of about four feet, and ebbed and flowed through the open sides of the wreck with every roll of the billows. These were the only women among the survivors; the rest had perished by exposure, starvation, and drowning. And not more than twenty in all now remained on board alive. Of this small number few indeed gave promise of seeing the light of another day.

I returned to the deck, and watched anxiously the movements of the men ashore, and other wistful and glassy eyes were fixed in the same direction. Imagine the sense of despair, the bitter heart-sickness which took possession of us, as we saw the men retrace their steps, without being able to render us the succor for which we yearned! One of the surviving women, the others were fast sinking, after hearing the report that there were living men to be seen on the beach, waded arm-pit deep through the water, to reach the torn and icy deck, and there shouted wildly amidst the whistling winds and surging roar of the surf; shrieked in the agony of despair for help, seeming to startle the very elements with her bitter cry of anguish—her wild, wild wail, while she waved a shred-like signal of distress. But still no rescuing hand came nigh, no sign of deliverance appeared.

After this disappointment, a blank look of resignation and utter hopelessness took possession of nearly all, and one man tottered into an opening in the wreck, and was drowned. Death began to give the finishing stroke to their misery. The day waned, and the wind increased to a heavy gale. The store-room had been carried away, and no provisions, beyond a very scanty supply of raw bacon and biscuits, had been accessible to us during the two previous days. There was no fresh water; but fortunately a bin of lemonade in the after-cabin was approachable, although not without plunging through

five feet of brine. Dead bodies floated about inside the wreck, and lay in frozen groups on the quarter-deck, not yet washed away. The storm grew louder as the darkness deepened, while the undying roar of the breakers sounded more awful to our ears than on any preceding night. It was like listening to our death-knell, which was at the same time the requiem of those who had gone before.

It was not until the morning of the second day following this, that men reappeared on the beach, and that a huge, rudely-constructed life-car—something like what an antediluvian bathing machine might be imagined to have been, if indeed such a feature could be supposed to have been associated with the lavatory operations of our ancestors before the traditional flood—was forced through the surf towards the wreck. I welcomed the sight of it with a shout of joy.

The land, bleak and arid, was still clothed in a garb of snow; and the cliffs reared their frosted and rocky heads high along the coast. The crested waves still decked out the distance seaward, and lashed with fury the defying shore, which seemed to say to the great deep: "Thus far shall thou go, but no further." And there the spent waters eddied and foamed among the rocky shallows, till they were gathered again into the embrace of the parent tide, "dark heaving, boundless, endless, and sublime."

At last the ruins of the once proud "Skimmer of the Seas" were reached, and the wreckers soon climbed their way to the broken stern of the vessel, the only part now remaining. Here I met them, for I was the only one on board capable of movement.

"Any one but you here?" was the first question asked.

"Yes; the captain and two ladies and a child," I answered.

"They're in the cabin."

"Nobody else?"

"No; all the others are dead."

I conducted one of the men to where the latter lay, emaciated, stiff, and nearly frozen, in the only berth above water besides the captain's. The child, cold, wan, and ghastly, but alive, still clung to the parent breast. Alas! its father had been murdered on board, and its mother had wailed, and wept,

and yearned, and prayed for its rescue during all the long weary days which had elapsed since the wreck; and when, as we have seen, she waved her signal from the deck, and appealed so wildly for help when the wreckers first appeared—she did so more for her child's sake than her own. But nature was exhausted now, and she was too feeble to speak above a whisper. Her companion—a sweet, blue-eyed girl about eighteen—was little better. To the wants of these I had attended with all the zeal of which I was capable, and the last words of the latter were: “Don't leave us; save me.”

I would have sacrificed my own life to save hers, after that.

The bruised and beaten body of the captain, and the two women and the child, were carried by the wreckers to the life-car, and with them, after an hour's journey, I arrived ashore, thanking God for my deliverance, and surveying with pride those whose lives had been spared by my exertions; while the soft blue eyes of the fair-haired girl, raised in eloquence to mine, repaid me in a glance for all I had suffered, and kindled hope anew.

The rapture I felt at that moment I shall never forget, and cannot describe. It was like emerging from the tomb; and life, to which I had been prepared to close my eyes, unfolded a long and charming vista to my imagination. I had never prized existence so much before, or felt more reconciled to my lot.

CHAPTER X.

HOW WE FARED, AND HOW I FELT.

From the beach where we landed we were conducted across a rough and desolate tract of country, till we came to a road leading to a small village, inhabited by fishing families and dogs. Here we halted, and received the hospitalities of the place. In the rude cottages of the villagers we found protection from the bitter cold, and in their coarse, black cake and

dried fish that scanty nourishment which we had so long craved. We found, too, warm hearts and willing hands to aid us, and we thanked God and the people for our rescue from a terrible impending death.

But not to all of us was the boon, if indeed it be a boon, of lengthened existence vouchsafed. The mother and her child died soon after our arrival at the village, the former preceding the other by only a few hours. I watched over them both, as exhausted nature yielded to repose; and Death, solemn, silent, and mysterious, snatched them from the world. I was not unfamiliar with the sight of the great enemy, as those who have followed this autobiography from its commencement are aware, but the departure of those two souls, which I had guarded on the wreck, touched me more than the spectacle of the inanimate curator in the stone building; and I mourned, and even moaned, their loss. Perhaps advancing years had something to do with it; for feeling is undeveloped in childhood, and hardens in the aged. Emotions are most tender and deep between the morning and the noon of manhood.

Only the young lady, the Captain, and myself remained of the number taken off the wreck; but the chief mate, and another of those who had gone ashore in the boat, were said to be in the light-house, which they had reached, after a fatiguing journey through the snow. The others had perished on the way.

For a week, Miss Morgan—the lady alluded to—and Captain Whittlestick, were so weak that their removal to St. John's, distant about thirty-four miles, was not attempted; and during this time I, who felt comparatively strong, was equally faithful in my attentions to both; but the balance of my sympathy was decidedly on the lady's side, and my only regret was, that I could do so little to restore her wasted strength, and raise her depressed spirits.

She had to mourn the loss of a brother and an aunt, as well as her own misfortune, for they shared the fate of many on the wreck. He was her only brother too. The blow was heavy indeed.

She had evidently been accustomed to the luxuries of life, and I grieved to see her in the midst of such humble surround-

ings as the fisherman's cottage, in which she was lodged, could alone supply. There she lay on a rude wooden bedstead, previously occupied by the owner's two children, with eyes drooping sadly, her rich, brown hair floating negligently over her pillow, which, like the bed, was stuffed with straw; and her tapering arms extended lifelessly by her side; a listless expression pervading her delicate, neatly-chiselled features; and a complexion, faint and wan through physical exhaustion, which paled and deepened with every passing emotion.

Her helplessness more than her beauty endeared me to her, for had she not been the sufferer she was, I should never have dared to feel that tender solicitude, that pity and self-sacrificing devotion which I did. I was too young to feel the full force of the passion of love, but she awakened within me feelings which I had never before experienced; and I gave way to the wildest imaginings, and built such castles in the air that their very ruins, still pictured in my memory, are beautiful to reflect upon. Hope allured me onward with a flattering tale, and Romance unveiled its mystery. She was my ideal of all beauty and feminine gentleness; the personification of all that is most divine on earth. I would have given the world to call her sister. She worked a wonderful change in my views of womankind; for my experiences under the tutelage of that virago of her sex, Mrs. Bangs, were enough to make a motherless boy live in perpetual dread of ever falling into the hands of another daughter of Eve. I certainly knew that there was at least one shrew, one termagant in the world, and I shuddered to think how many more there might be. But here was an example that redeemed all.

The anxiety with which I watched the gradual recovery of Miss Morgan from the nervous and physical prostration under which she labored, was intense. It seemed as if my own life hung upon hers, and that if the lamp of her own existence expired, mine would also flicker and die out in pure sympathy. It was, therefore, with no common joy that I saw her eye brighten, and the hue of heightened vitality return to her face; and when the roseate blush of returning health at length came, my own pulse quickened with delight, and my brain teemed with brilliant fancies, which turned the cold, hard world into a

beautiful garden of paradise—none the less lovely because unreal. Ah! the dawn of that happy dream of youth! How pleasant are its memories even now! There is no elixir like the unwritten poetry of the first love of a human being of acute sensibilities. Those whose matter-of-fact, prosaic nature has never permitted them to feel its holy influence, have never experienced the acme of felicity; have never gathered flowers in the blooming realms of fancy, nor felt the rapture kindled by those visions which imagination can unfold.

But a truce to sentiment, while we travel to St. John's, where we arrived in an open wagon, nine days after our landing from the wreck.

The Captain still presented a sorry appearance, with his head bandaged, his face plastered, and his body so enfeebled that he could hardly walk without support. Only a strong man could have survived such injuries and hardship as had fallen to his lot.

Miss Morgan had so far recovered her health and strength as to feel ready and even anxious to embark on the first vessel leaving St. John's for New York; and my own cuts and bruises, inflicted by the mutineers, were rapidly healing. We had saved nothing from the wreck but our lives, and fortunately I had nothing else to lose; but my companions doubtless felt the inconvenience of being without money or baggage. The people of St. John's, however, with praiseworthy generosity, got up a subscription for us immediately on our arrival, and the accommodations of the City Hotel were offered us, free of expense. I began to see that there was some charity in the world, after all, and my opinion of it underwent a decided change for the better. The cod-fish aristocracy of St. John's acquired in my estimation a new title to distinction, for they had given evidence of a nobility more sterling than that which the peerage could confer.

"Washington, what are you going to do?" asked Miss Morgan, on the second day after we had entered the Newfoundland capital, which most people erroneously suppose to be buried in fog nearly half the year round; whereas the fogs that prevail on the Great Bank (on which so many vessels have received a check) rarely extend to the city, which is far less foggy than

London, where the atmosphere may sometimes be cut with a knife and fork, and scooped out with a spoon.

The question took me somewhat by surprise, and I looked up at her with curiosity. It was one that I was unable to answer, and which circumstances would have to decide. I was so glad at escaping with my life that I had since given but little heed to the future.

"I don't know," I answered. "I guess I'll have to do what the Captain says. Why?"

"Because, Washington, I'd like you to go to New York with me."

"Thank you, Miss Morgan; you're very kind. I should like that myself. But I thought we'd all go there together."

"Well, that is uncertain at present. I shall go by a vessel that is to leave in two or three days, and Captain Whittlestick may remain here longer than that."

"Oh! then, I'd rather go with you," I exclaimed in the fullness of my heart, and a truer expression of feeling was never uttered.

"Then I'll speak to Captain Whittlestick about you," continued Miss Morgan, "and I've no doubt he'll let you go."

"Oh! yes, I'm sure he will," said I, with an evident disposition to clinch the matter. After this I felt a new joy, and when I next found myself in the open air, I leapt and ran in a pure intoxication of delight. The chrysalis was fast emerging from its shell; the demure boy was revealing the enthusiasm of his nature, and experiencing those vague yearnings which are born of youth, hope, ambition, and a sanguine temperament.

The result of this conversation was, that when Miss Morgan went on board the schooner, to which she had reference, I accompanied her. It was a glad time for me, for wherever she went I rejoiced to go, and it would have pained me sadly to have been left behind. I felt as much pleasure as a lover when he finds his love reciprocated; I was proud, grateful, delighted. I had at last found a friend! And is it wonderful that I worshipped her? I would have braved and suffered any thing for her; have followed her, if necessary, into the very jaws of death, feeling no dread, and careless of consequences. And

yet I hoped for no reward, and had no worldly interest in view. It was pure, unadulterated sentiment, genuine admiration, the true impulse of a young and ardent nature ; and the unalloyed pleasure, the heartfelt gratification which an indulgence in my cherished feelings afforded me, is one of the most beautiful memories of my life. I could rhapsodize for pages over this one loved theme, but I regard it as too sacred even now for minute dissection and photographic description, without which some are incapable of investing the narrative of such experiences with even ordinary interest.

The amphitheatric city of St. John's lay before me, with its irregularly-built, low-storied, brick and wooden houses, its tall cathedral, and its fortified hills, as I stood on the deck of the schooner, while she glided out of the beautiful land-locked bay, surrounded by innumerable fish-drying platforms, called "flakes ;" and passing through the Narrows—a channel walled in on both sides by lofty cliffs, supporting heavy batteries—found herself on the heaving bosom of the Atlantic.

CHAPTER XI.

A NEW PROSPECT PRESENTS ITSELF.

It was only natural that Miss Morgan should have evinced her interest in me by asking me some questions bearing upon my former life. We were seated alone one day in the cabin of the schooner, when she said : "How came you to go to sea, Washington ?"

And when I returned the answer, "I ran away," her curiosity was quickened, and she was anxious to learn more.

"I ran away," I continued, "because the old lady I lived with in Boston treated me so badly, that if I'd staid I should have died. She was always flogging me within an inch of my life, and threatening to go an inch further next time. It's a wonder to myself that I lived as long as I did with her. She starved me, too, all the years I was with her, and said that she

would never give me the chance to dig my grave with my teeth, as many folks did. But hunger was doing the work faster than teeth could have done it, and I was nothing better than a living skeleton."

She then asked me further particulars of my life, antecedent to this period, and I told her that my history was to a great extent a mystery to myself, but that I lived in hope of unravelling it by-and-by.

"I've read of such cases in novels," she remarked, after hearing my story, "but never knew of one in real life before. What a pity that you were left without any one to take care of you!"

"Yes," I said regretfully, "I never knew a mother's love, or a sister's caress, never——"

The tears welled up into my eyes, and I left the sentence unfinished.

"Poor fellow!" and my companion, in sympathy with me, shared my emotion. "Never mind, Washington," she said, with an effort, "I'll be a sister to you now."

"Thank you. You're very kind to say so. I only wish you always had been, I should have been saved many miseries. But will you really?" I said, suddenly awaking to a full sense of the boon she might possibly be conferring upon me, and looking straight into her face.

She took my hand, and whispered: "Yes!" Then she surveyed me with a playful smile, and a look of pride, and said: "Are you glad?"

"Glad!" I exclaimed, "I am more than glad—I'm grateful."

"I'm sure it is I who ought to be grateful to you, for saving my life," she replied. "When we get to New York I'm going to speak to my father about you; and I know he'll do whatever I ask him. Wouldn't you like a situation there?"

"Oh! very much," I replied. "Do you think he'll give me one?"

"Yes; perhaps he'll give you a place in his own banking-house. Would you like that?"

"His own banking-house! Oh! yes, I should, better than any thing else."

Visions of gold dazzled my imagination, and I felt that my fortune was made already.

On our arrival in New York, eleven days after leaving St. John's, she invited me to accompany her home, and a lumbering, four-wheeled, two-horsed vehicle, constructed with a view to its being used as a mourning-coach whenever occasion required, carried us at a funereal pace to the east side of Union Square, where it stopped.

It was five in the afternoon, and the air was filled with falling snow, which had muffled the city with a motley carpet, for as the snow fell, it gradually thawed, and was trampled into slush in crowded thoroughfares. But it hung in spotless purity on the leafless branches of the trees, and railings of the Square; it placed a crown on the head of the statue of Washington; and it made invisible green of the grass within the inclosure. It gave a helmet to every street-lamp, and a mantle of ermine to every house-top.

Miss Morgan, in her impatience to cross the threshold of home, rushed up the steps with an impulse of joy, leaving me to follow. The door opened as she reached the head of the flight of steps; the figure of a lady flew forward to meet her, and the next moment the two were locked in each other's arms, my companion sobbing bitterly.

"What's the matter, my dear?" asked the elder one in alarm. "Where's John and your aunt?"

"Then you've not heard?" exclaimed the other, raising her head from the bosom in which it had been buried.

"O mother! mother, dear, we were wrecked, and aunt and John ——"

The poor girl's grief stifled further utterance, but the dreadful truth flashed upon the mind of Mrs. Morgan, and she gave a faint scream, and sank powerless into a chair in the hall.

"Tell me, tell me, where are they?" she gasped, anxious to know the worst.

Her daughter knelt down, and, with a sudden effort at self-control, raised her liquid eyes, and in the sorrow of her heart, solemnly whispered the sad tidings: "They are gone!" The mother, trembling and pale with agitation, gave an hysterical

scream, and clasped her daughter in a frantic embrace. Then tears came to her relief, and both mother and daughter wept together in their great affliction. It was a painful, touching scene.

"Mother, don't cry," spoke Miss Morgan, with an effort to recover her self-possession; "I have great cause to be thankful that I was spared; four hundred perished—all but five on board; and if it hadn't been for Washington, (looking towards me), I should have gone like the rest. He saved me!"

She sank sobbing in her mother's lap, but the mother's eyes were fixed on me, as I stood just inside the closed door, a silent spectator of the interview. Then she raised her voice: "He saved you: he saved you! God bless him!" And I believe that she would have embraced me in very gratitude if her strength had enabled her to rise.

At this juncture the door-bell rang, and I raised the latch to admit a gentleman of about fifty-five years, and five feet ten, with a large, round body, and a large, round face, the latter abounding in creases, and inclining to the florid. His hair was very fine, gray, and abundant; and his keen, brown eyes were overhung by bushy brows, also silvered by the hand of Time.

He met me with a look of surprise, but started at the sight of the ladies.

"Gertrude!" he exclaimed in astonishment, as his gaze met that of his daughter. "Oh! my dear, when did you arrive?" and he stooped and kissed her fondly.

She clung to him.

"What's the matter, my dear? where's John and your aunt?"

It was painful to answer; there was a momentary pause; another burst of grief; and then the terrible tidings met his ear.

"Father! dear father! I'm the only one left!"

And she told, as well as she could in broken sentences, the awful story of the wreck. And the strong man listened with bated breath, and bent down by her side, and wept, and trembled, and grew pallid under the weight of this great sorrow—the loss of his only son and beloved sister. His wife clutched

him nervously, and they shared together the grief of a common loss.

"You are but a boy," said he, a few minutes afterwards, when his daughter had told him of my part in the catastrophe, at the same time taking me warmly by the hand, and eyeing me closely; "but you are a brave one, and I am glad to thank you for all that you've done for my daughter. Consider me your friend; and whatever I can do for you I will."

Shortly after this, I was invited to make myself at home, and a hall bed-room on the top floor was assigned to my exclusive use. I was overjoyed, and very thankful. No gorgeous *suite* of apartments in a royal palace ever gave greater satisfaction to their occupant than that plain hall bed-room did to me. I felt that I was in clover at last. I was installed in the house of the first woman who had aroused my admiration, and awakened that sublime, divine passion which I had never before felt. The mere idea elated me, and in the gladness of my heart I leapt and laughed, ay, and even prayed that the cup of happiness just raised to my lips might not be dashed aside, but that fortune would continue to smile upon me, and that even the possibilities of which I as yet only dared to dream, might some day come to pass. Hope and ambition combined to add fuel to the fire of my enthusiasm, and in the exuberance of my spirits, my imagination carried me far into the glowing future. Ah! how like the mirage of the fruitless desert are many of the fond imaginings of our youth! But who, after all, would miss those bright visions that beguiled us when we stood on the threshold of the great world, before experience, stern, bitter, and sorrowful, had taught us how delusive were the hopes we cherished; that "all is not gold that glitters;" that the paths of life are hard to travel, and even those of glory "lead but to the grave;" that a thorn lurks beneath every rose; that life is beset with more misery than it is brightened with happiness; that among mankind there is more vice and uncharitableness than virtue and generosity, and far more love of mammon than of merit; and that, above all,

"Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long."

I began to think I might become a great man some day; that I might unravel the mystery that hung over me, and come into a large fortune, and marry. Ah! whom? what business had I to be dreaming of a wife and fireside joys—I hardly yet in the middle of my teens? How dared I to aspire to such dignity? Ah! well!

On the next evening after my arrival, Mr. Morgan sent for me, and I found him alone in the up-stairs sitting-room, where he was in the habit of spending his leisure when at home.

“My daughter has been speaking to me about you, Washington, and I want to see what I can do for you. She tells me that you’re a scholar, and would like to go into an office. Now if you think you would like it, and are willing to do your best to work your own way up in the world, I’ll give you a situation at a salary large enough to enable you to support yourself, in my banking-house.”

“Thank you, Sir,” I said, “I’m very much obliged to you, and I’ll do my best to merit your kindness.”

“Then,” resumed my benefactor, “let me give you a little advice. I’m told that you never had a father or mother to instruct you, and have had a hard time of it. You’re now about to commence your career in life anew, and your future depends upon the good use you make of your present opportunities. When you enter my employ to-morrow, you’ll begin the management of your own affairs. I shall give you at first a salary of forty dollars a month, payable weekly, and with this you can board comfortably in some quiet and respectable private family. You ought not to pay more than four or five dollars for board, and the balance ought to supply you with clothing, pay for your washing, and leave you always with a balance in hand. When I began life, I know that I had to get along with much less. Practise economy; never spend quite as much as you earn; be careful of your companions, for bad company has been the ruin of thousands; you’ll find very few friends; you may find a friend some day in your wife, and your wife’s father, but you’ll find few real friends besides; attend some place of worship twice every Sunday; make a practice of rising early, and cultivating habits of industry; remember that ‘early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and

wise ;' I get up at six o'clock every morning, winter and summer, and go to bed, as a usual thing, regularly at eleven ; that gives me seven hours' sleep—I don't believe in 'four for a man, six for a sluggard, and eight for a fool ;' but too much sleep makes a man grow rusty. It is unnecessary for me to impress upon you the value of honesty, integrity, punctuality, and perseverance in business. Without these you'll never succeed in the long run. Be careful of your good name. You know what Shakspeare says : ' Who steals my purse steals trash ; but he who filches from me my good name robs me of that which not enriches him, and makes me poor indeed.' I don't care what you've been hitherto, but follow these maxims in the future, and with such natural intelligence as I see you possess, and such a letter of introduction as you carry in your face, you'll be sure to get on, and you'll always find me a friend in need. Till you choose a boarding-place, you can remain here ; and now that I think of it, one of my clerks, Mr. Johnson, may take you ; I'll speak to him to-morrow about it. Be down at the bank—Edward Morgan and Company, forty-five Wall Street—in the morning by ten o'clock, after that, always at nine. Stay ! here's fifty dollars ; you'd better get yourself some new clothes with this.

I thanked him again, and returned to the front-basement, which was hung with pictures, and used as a breakfast and tea-room by the family. There I met Miss Morgan,

"Well, what did father say to you? Oh! I'm so glad ; I knew he would!" she exclaimed, when I told her of my good fortune.

"Now, Washington, every thing depends upon yourself," she continued giving the finishing touch, as I thought, to her father's excellent piece of advice.

"Does it indeed?" I said to myself, and I resolved to keep those words steadily before me ever after. They would guide and encourage me, give me confidence in myself to accomplish what otherwise I might despair of, and while rendering me cautious of committing wrong, embolden me to fight manfully the battle of life, despairing of nothing. And who could tell what I might not achieve, when every thing depended upon myself?

CHAPTER XII.

WALL STREET AND THE BOARDING HOUSE.

I left the house in Union Square immediately after breakfast, on the next morning, with the fifty-dollar bank-bill in my pocket, to buy a new suit of clothes, before going to the bank. It was the largest sum of money I had ever touched, and, in my own estimation, it added considerably to my importance.

As the clock of Trinity Church struck ten I entered the banking-house, and inquired for Mr. Morgan, who in a few minutes afterwards emerged from his private office and introduced me to Mr. Perkins, the cashier, with the remark: "Mr. Perkins will find you plenty to do."

He then called for Mr. Johnson, who came forward. "This is a young man I feel an interest in," said he; "he's to be in the office, and I want to see him in a comfortable home. Can you take him to board in your family?"

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Johnson.

"Then that's all right. You can settle the terms between you," said Mr. Morgan, and I was fairly installed.

"I'll take down your name," observed the cashier, and he opened a book and made me spell it for him—*Washington Edmonds*. He asked me where I lived, and his eye-brows were suddenly drawn up in surprise when I told him I was then staying at Mr. Morgan's house, and I noticed that his nose simultaneously performed a sniffing movement like that of certain animals in search of food; his eye-lids, too, went up and down, and he gave his mouth a couple of twists which reminded me of a horse impatient of the bit. He seemed a little puzzled, a little displeased, and considerably astonished.

"That man," I said to myself, "has a son of his own that he wants to get into the bank, and he regards me as an interloper." He was probably fifty, and thin, cadaverous, hollow-cheeked, hollow-eyed, narrow-shouldered, black-haired, tall, angular, and apparently dyspeptic. He was dressed in a com-

plete suit of black, and addicted to making strange noises in his throat at frequent intervals. He would have been recognized as an American in London, Paris, or New Zealand.

I was set to work at indexing a letter-book at first, and afterwards received a lesson in the art of using the copying-press, and another in stamping checks, and so the day wore away. At five o'clock Mr. Johnson came to me and said: "I'm going home now, will you come with me?" I asked the cashier if he had any further use for me, and he answered drily: "No."

"We'll get into the stage," said my companion when we entered the street, and I followed him up the high steps of an omnibus, which started before I had got fairly in, and threw me into the lap of an old lady with a large umbrella and a small lap-dog, that snarled at my unceremonious advances. She made room for me beside her, near the door, while Mr. Johnson rose and struggled between two opposing lines of limbs towards a small round aperture near the top, where he knocked with his cents to arrest the attention of the driver, but failing in that, he pulled the strap, which gave the latter control over the door, and finally succeeded in paying his fare, and moving back in a stooping posture, and unusually red in the face, to his seat, which, during his absence, had been occupied by a new-comer. Mr. Johnson smiled grimly, and so did one or two others; but he said nothing, and showed his good nature by standing. I was about to offer him my own seat when the omnibus stopped, and a lady entered. She saw the omnibus was full, and cast a threatening look at me, which I interpreted as a demand for my seat. The next moment I rose and offered it. She took it as a matter of course, without a word or a "Thank you," and then handed me a dollar-bill to pass to the driver; but as Mr. Johnson was nearer the top, he took charge of it. The driver refused to change it, whereupon somebody handed me a ten-cent piece to pay for her, which went the way of the bill, there being a return of four cents in change, which I handed back. The lady looked on complacently. I cannot say whether she thanked the gentleman who paid her fare, but she appeared to regard the proceeding as perfectly right and proper. The omnibus stopped several times to take in more passengers, some of whom were

deterred from entering by its already over-crowded appearance, but others pushed their way up, and hung on to the step and door behind, utterly regardless of comfort. It was damp and cold, and the streets were muddy, so the windows were all kept shut; and by unanimous consent, the sixteen people inside breathed each other's breath, and excluded fresh air, while the windows trickled with the vapor.

I was glad when Mr. Johnson pulled the strap, and we alighted. "Those stage-owners," said he, "make the public do *their* work. There ought to be a conductor to every stage, to receive fares. I had to pass no less than five different ones, and hand back the change, besides losing my seat."

We turned out of Broadway into Ninth street, and soon after crossing Fifth Avenue, my companion said, "This is the house," and we ascended the steps together.

"This is Mrs. Johnson," said he, introducing me, in the front parlor a few moments afterwards. "He's in the office, and Mr. Morgan recommended him to me."

"Very kind, I'm sure. What sized room would you like? I've only a small one, on the top floor; perhaps that would suit you."

"Yes," I said, "what will that be?"

Mrs. Johnson glanced at her husband, but he turned to the window. "We have let that before for six dollars," she replied, "but——"

"Five will be enough," put in Mr. Johnson.

"I can't pay more than that," I remarked—"four or five."

"Ah! we never take any one for four," she observed, bringing her hands together and smiling away the indignity I had offered her.

"Would you like to see the room?"

"Thank you, I would."

"Then come up with me,"

She led the way to the attic, and I took possession of an apartment not quite big enough to swing a cat in, (if the illustration is allowable,) and furnished with a single bed, a chair, a cracked looking-glass, a wash-basin to match, a rickety toilet-table, and a portrait of my great namesake Washington, which hung over the head of the bed, and looked down upon me benignly.

Mrs. Johnson was a lady not far from forty, but on which side of the number I could not say. She was a faded beauty, with too genuine a love of nature to have her decayed teeth extracted, and a set of artificial ones substituted, so, when she smiled, two rows of blackened masticators presented a dark line between her thin well-shaped lips; and she had evidently formed a habit of compressing these as much as possible. Her face was furrowed from the forehead to the chin, which was rather longer than was consistent with perfect symmetry—a common feature, however, among my countrywomen, and especially New Yorkers. Her complexion had once been bright, but was now of a pale, yellowish fruity tint; it was heightened by a touch of rouge, however; while her eyes, overhung by long, dark, drooping lashes, were black and lustrous, sparkling with animation and intelligence.

Her husband had never been good-looking to the world at large, but possibly she had recognized in him charms which others had failed to detect. He was a little past her own age, with nothing whatever remarkable about him. He was of a common type of humanity, such as we see, without particularly observing, wherever we go. He had a rather large head, with brown hair tinged with gray, and inclining to baldness, a short thick neck, round shoulders, and a body five feet eight, by more than the usual circumference; his eyes were in color like his hair, and somewhat watery; he had a habit of laughing in a good-humored, grunting, asthmatic way, which would have jarred on a musical ear; and another of saying, every few minutes during conversation, "That's so—that's so," whether it was so or not.

At six o'clock dinner was served in the back-parlor, which was separated from the front one merely by a folding-door, and then for the first time I saw the boarders. They came trooping in one after another, and took their accustomed seats at the table. I was introduced to a lady sitting next to me, who, however, expressed the pleasure she felt at our meeting by persistently "looking the other way," and not saying a word to me or giving me the chance to say one to her during the meal. She had no idea of fraternizing with boys or hobbledoys I could see.

Four ladies and six gentlemen, besides the host at the end of the table, and the hostess at the other, and myself, were soon seated at the table, and there was still a blank spot left where an empty chair, a napkin and a knife and fork, represented one absentee.

During dinner there was no lack of conversation, and the proceedings were on the whole mirthful.

One young gentleman, with a red neck-tie and a white face, manifested a decided inclination to be humorous, and was evidently a lion in his way. He amused himself by "poking fun" at every body else, and turning their solemn truths into harmless ridicule. He had something to say about every thing, and when a grave gentleman, with a parchment-colored complexion, spoke about the success of a missionary society, he immediately evinced decided opinions on the subject, alleging that in the Sandwich Islands, the missionaries compelled the natives to do the work of horses in pulling them from village to village in their wicker-carriages, and winding up with the quotation:

"If I were a cassowary
On the sands of Timbuctoo,
I'd eat a missionary,
Skin and bone and hymn-book too."

The parchment-faced gentleman attempted to dispute the argument, but was annihilated by a skilfully directed cross-fire.

Mrs. Sneezer was a prodigious old lady, half as broad as long, resembling a rolled-up feather-bed, as thick at the waist as elsewhere, with a bolster neck, and a face nearly as big as a pillow. She wore conspicuously false teeth, and unmistakably false hair, her brown wig, abounding in curls and plaited hair, being so far awry as to indicate a perfect indifference to appearances on her part. Behind, the short gray hair was visible under her black silk cap. She tied her napkin up with three old boot-strings knotted together. She took snuff over her soup, out of a half-ounce package, and left traces of it on her upper lip. She apologized for taking it, and said that it kept her spirits up. She further remarked, that if it had not been for Mr. — a certain gentleman at the table—giving her

a piece of tobacco on the previous Sunday, when she ran out of snuff, wherewith to manufacture some, she did not know what she would have done.

There were a pair of snuffers in the house, for towards the close of the meal I saw Mr. Squeezem—a lawyer, as I subsequently discovered, with a small practice and a large family—put a finger and thumb into his waistcoat pocket and transfer something to his nose. He was of a lanky build, and his clothes appeared too large for him. He was partially bald, too, but with a wet brush had stretched the long, straight, dark hair that adorned the region immediately above his ears, across his naked cranium. This gentleman, after dinner, commenced an industrious manipulation of his nose, and elevated his boots to the top of the mantel-piece, exhibiting at the same time several days' mud on his lower garments.

One apoplectic-looking gentleman, with a face like a full-moon in a fog, was incidentally told by the party with the white face and the red neck-tie, that he would make a fine old corpse—an observation which produced a laugh, but appeared in nowise to disconcert him. Then the same young gentleman said to a nervous-looking man, with squirrel eyes and an unpleasant way of twitching his face, "If you're not the head of a donkey, nor the tail of a donkey, what part of a donkey are you?" Upon which the latter ate more voraciously than before, and then strangled a laugh into a sheepish *ne—igh*. He evidently knew the speaker well, and considered him a privileged nuisance.

On entering the drawing-room I found the stout lady snoring, with a postage-stamp on her nose, which, on awaking, she declared had been placed there by Mr. Squibber, the audacious young man with the red neck-tie.

I had not been many moments in the room, when a dark-faced man, under the medium height, entered. I had seen that face before. He appeared, from his cold, unfamiliar manner, to be a new boarder. As I closely scrutinized the features, I thought of the man in the sack whom I had helped to Mr. Bangs's old clothes; and the longer I looked at him, the more I was impressed with the idea that he was the same individual. But there was a change. The man who had been

hanged wore a heavy beard and moustache when he made his escape from the stone building, but the individual before me had neither. This, however, only increased my suspicions. He sat down. I approached him.

"Do you know me?" I asked. "Did you ever see me in Boston—in the Medical Building?"

His face grew pallid, his limbs trembled; he seized my hand spasmodically, and said:

"Are you the boy?"

"That gave you the clothes?" I queried.

"Yes."

"I am," I answered.

His agitation increased.

"Are you going out?" he inquired. I saw that he wanted to speak to me privately, and answered:

"Yes."

We walked out together.

He grasped my hand warmly, so warmly that it ached for minutes afterwards, as we walked towards the Sixth Avenue.

"I see you have discovered me," he said, "but I am not sorry that we've met again. I can never repay you. The only favor I ask now is, that you'll not betray me—that you'll say nothing about my escape; that you'll tell nobody that I'm alive. I'll leave that house to-night. Will you promise me?"

"Don't leave," I said, "I'll say nothing. I'm sorry I spoke to you."

"I must, I must," he replied, with an imploring look. "But you'll still be my friend, won't you? I shall leave the country soon. I'll go back and get my baggage now; you'll promise not to say a word of the truth, won't you?"

I renewed my assurance, and he again grasped my hand tightly.

"Then wait here, will you, while I go and pay my bill?"

"I'll do any thing to satisfy you that I mean you no injury."

He ran back to the house, and in a few minutes returned, saying, seriously:

"I've packed up; I'm going for a coach; come with me."

"You mistrust me," I said.

"No, no; come along." The voice was thick and hoarse. I complied. An adjoining stable supplied a carriage, and he drove back without me to take away his trunk.

"Then it was his place that was vacant at dinner," I said to myself musingly. "How strange that I should have met him again!"

When I returned, perplexed and wondering, one of Mr. Morgan's servants was waiting in the hall with a message for me. I was wanted in Union Square.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHICH IS ON THE WHOLE BOTH MIRTHFUL AND SENTIMENTAL.

After answering Miss Morgan's numerous inquiries, as to how I liked the bank and the boarding-house, and satisfying her that I was very comfortable and happy indeed, I returned home; and happening to go down-stairs in search of a drink of what Mrs. Bangs facetiously called "Adam's ale," I found the front-room adjoining the kitchen in the basement, occupied by a merry company, consisting of the gentlemen boarders and two of their friends, who were engaged in the agreeable task of concocting a bowl of punch.

I was about to close the door after looking in, when several voices cried, "Come in!" and I was invited to make one of the party. I remembered the advice Mr. Morgan had so recently given me, and I felt that I was in danger of doing a wrong thing; but being at home, and in the house of my employer's clerk, I ventured to comply.

"What have you done with Mr. Jones?" asked one, evidently alluding to the boarder who had just left.

"Where's he gone? what made him leave?" inquired another.

"I knew him in Boston," said I.

"Well, who is he?"

"I don't know."

"What made him leave as soon as he saw you were here?"

"I cannot say."

"He's afraid of you, that's certain."

The materials for the punch had been purchased by general subscription of the boarders; and Mr. Wasper, the bee-faced gentleman, with squirrel eyes and an unpleasant way of twitching his features, was president by his own appointment, and punch-maker by his own determination. The materials had just arrived from a neighboring corner grocery—lemons, brandy, rum, and sugar—and a brass kettle was singing industriously on the fire, and spouting steam in whale-like puffs.

"Now, spiderface, fire away," said Mr. Squibber, the young man with the white face and red neck-tie, addressing Mr. Wasper, who forthwith redoubled his exertions in the preliminary lemonade-making. This done, after much tasting he added the brandy, and then twice as much rum, stirring the mixture all the while with an energy worthy of a cook making custard. Then he drank three champagne glasses-full at short intervals, in order to satisfactorily test its quality, following which he persisted in handing the same glass all round, instead of waiting till others were brought in. Some did not like the principle of having only one glass for eight mouths, but Mr. Wasper silenced objection by saying: "O man! what's the odds?" Others remarked that the punch had too much rum in it, to which he made a similar reply, at the same time giving a practical indorsement of the excellence of his brewing, by drinking another glass. The parlor-maid and a tray full of glasses here entered the room.

"The deuce take the tray; I take the seven," said Mr. Squibber, and the seven glasses immediately found their way into as many hands.

By this time the visual orbs of the punch-maker had begun to assume a bleary aspect, and his mental faculties to undergo considerable obfuscation, while he became proportionately excited. He spoke incoherently in a thick voice, and his face

assumed an oily polish, which led the irrepressible Squibber to remark that he was the most polished man he ever saw.

Two glasses were filled, and the punch-brewer was deputed to carry them up to Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, who were supposed to be dozing in their private parlor; and Wasper staggered up-stairs to execute the task, spilling the contents by the way. Then two more glasses were filled for Mrs. Sneezer and Miss Crane, a lady with a neck like a giraffe, the same who sat next to me at dinner, both of whom were in the parlor, wondering what the gentlemen were doing down-stairs, to be making so much noise; and Wasper again staggered up-stairs, but to his dismay neither of the ladies would accept the proffered beverage, so down he came to report the circumstance, emptying the glasses as he did so, for the double purpose of lightening his burden and slaking his thirst. But the punch-drinkers below would not listen to a refusal, and promptly re-filled the glasses, and sent him back to enforce compliance, several of them accompanying him to the parlor-door, where they stood grinning, while Wasper, with a glass in each hand, which he vainly endeavored to dispose of, cut a very ridiculous figure indeed. So, after considerable laughter at his expense, he withdrew with a rolling movement, and obtained satisfaction by appropriating the contents of the glasses to himself, as in the previous instance.

The punch continued to circulate with great rapidity after this, and every body seemed to take delight in proposing bumper-toasts, to all of which Wasper faithfully drank, while the others did not, but looked on, and enjoyed the fun heartily. It was evidently the design of the party to get him under the table in the shortest possible time. All insisted on the president keeping his glass full, and leaving no "heel-taps," whenever he raised it to his lips, and in this manner it came to pass that by the time the punch-bowl was empty he had drank about five times as much as any one else. His countenance had become bloated and very shiny, while his eyes looked fishy, and the veins of his hands and temples bulged out like streaks of maccaroni and vermicelli. Nevertheless, he exclaimed: "Gen'lm-en, I proposhe 'nother punch!"

"I second that motion," said Mr. Squeezem, the lawyer

with the small practice and a large family, whose better-half was waiting for his coming up-stairs, at the same moment grasping a couple of lemons which lay on the mantel-piece.

"Hold, enough!" cried the apoplectic-looking gentleman, who had been told that he would make a fine old corpse.

"Go on, MacDuff!" said Squibber to the punch-brewer, and the work proceeded accordingly.

"Give us a song," said Mr. Squeezem to the wearer of the red neck-tie, who occasionally made the air melodious in his own room. The obliging Squibber promptly assented, and, after clearing his throat, in trumpet-tones, commenced:

"If I were Margery Daw,
If I were Margery Daw."

First in a low key, then in a high key, and again in a falsetto, he repeated the one line till he provoked his audience to laughter, and ended in a peal himself.

Then a German, with round, blue eyes, screened by a pair of spectacles, was called upon for a story, which he began in the Teutonic tongue, greatly to the amusement of the rest of the company, who had not the remotest idea of what he was talking about.

"You may stand down, witness," said the owner of the red neck-tie, and the representative of Vaterland subsided.

"I rise to a point of order," said Mr. Squeezem. "I maintain that Mr. Wasper is mistaking rum for brandy."

"That's so!" ejaculated the brewer. Meanwhile Mr. Squibber withdrew Mr. Squeezem's chair, and when the latter attempted to sit down, he went to the floor, to the great merriment of the rest of the party. His wife opened the door at that moment, and saw her lord and master in the awkward act of sprawling. She withdrew hastily from the gaze of so many, and called him out for a lecture, which had the effect of inducing him to accompany her up-stairs, and we saw no more of him that night.

"It's your turn for a remark, Wasper," observed the incorrigible Squibber.

"T-t-t-tell-ell, tell you wha-t-t t-is," ejaculated that worthy in response, but *vox faucibus haesit*; he could say no more.

At this juncture some one, apparently accidentally, upset his glass of punch over Mr. Wasper's whiskers, a circumstance which caused him to grin like a wild beast, and stammer aloud. The offender bowed his apologies, but was simultaneously attacked in a playful manner by the outraged party, who had the misfortune to lose his balance, and go to the ground in the endeavor to obtain satisfaction. He was picked up, however, without delay, and a general reconciliation took place over a bumper to the ladies. The bowl, for the second time, soon became empty, and glistening eyes, and flushed faces were turned upon each other.

"Let's have a game of leap-frog," suggested Squibber. "Wasper, I'll give you a back."

The table was pushed aside, and the offer was accepted by the latter with a grin, and the next moment he flew over it, like a shuttle-cock from a battle door, and, luckily for himself, fell into the arms and stomach of the inflated German, (whom Squibber called German sausage,) instead of against the wall, to the intense disgust of Mynheer, who could not suppress an exclamation of pain. Then quickly returning, as if by the rebounding force of the collision, he again flew at the barricade, which by this time had become a crossing-bridge for the whole party; but this time he failed to clear the leap in his flight, and he dropped with his full weight upon the head of Squibber, and both went down together. The noise had become so great as to disturb the other inmates of the house, and loud knocking from the outside was now heard at the door, which one of the revellers had locked, at the same time hiding the key.

"Who's dat knocking at de door?" modestly inquired Mr. Squibber. When the key was at length found, Mrs. Johnson appeared, and expressed her surprise that gentlemen should so far forget themselves, and they were all dumb.

The party then broke up. Wasper dashed up-stairs wildly, heaving and staggering from banister to wall, and entered the front-parlor, where Mrs. Sneezer and Miss Crane were still seated. He looked around vacantly, but made no attempt to open his mouth. Then he dropped on to a chair, and, burying his head in his hands, began to doze. The German, sitting

near, nudged him, upon which he groaned and whined, to the great alarm of Miss Crane, who very properly rose and left the room.

“Mr. Wasper, let me offer you a pinch of snuff,” said Mrs. Sneezer. “I see you’re sleepy;” and he plunged his thumb and finger deep into the half-ounce package, which she held towards him.

Mr. Wasper began to sneeze.

“Poor young man,” she soliloquized, “what will become of him?”

I left her giving him some very good advice for his future guidance, and went to bed, to dream over my first day’s experience in the boarding-house. I have said thus much about it because it remained my home for more than five years, during the whole course of which I never witnessed a repetition of the scene I have just attempted to describe. Indeed, life in the boarding-house became monotonous, and lest the reader should have any doubt on the subject, I may mention that on this occasion I was not one of the punch-drinkers, although I confess to an indulgence in more laughter than such an exhibition of intemperance should have called forth. The thoughtlessness of youth is, however, proverbial, and now, in my graver years, I would moralize sadly over what at one time might have simply amused me. “Be temperate in all things,” is an injunction I always strive to obey, and I condemn intemperance as I would a crime, just as I advocate the practice of the Christian virtues—including a strict morality—and the careful observance of religious and social duties, for we owe an example to society as well as a duty to ourselves.

Mr. Wasper was never known to commit a single indiscretion after that recorded, and he married Mrs. Sneezer’s only daughter about a twelvemonth after he had listened to her good advice. Mr. Squibber left for parts unknown, after incurring a debt for board, which he found it inconvenient to liquidate, and so the spirit of the party vanished.

During these five years, in spite of the enmity of the cashier, I had worked my way up in the bank to a confidential position, and a salary of a thousand dollars per annum; I had, too, been a regular visitor at the house in Union Square, and my

attachment for Miss Morgan had only strengthened with the lapse of time, while she invariably manifested towards me a more than sisterly affection. Her mother had more than once hinted to her that she appeared to care for no one but me.

"Do you know what they say of us, Washington?" she said one evening when I entered the drawing-room.

"No; what?"

"Why, they say we're going to be married!"

"How very nice!" I exclaimed, taking her hand; "there's many a true thing said in jest."

She colored slightly, and turned away with a laugh.

I felt a little embarrassment, but endeavored not to show it.

"Well, what did you tell them?"

"I didn't tell them anything; I said that people talked a great deal of nonsense."

"What a pity I'm not the fortunate man. If I were, how happy I should be. I'm sorry I've not a hundred thousand a year."

"Why?"

"Because then I'd say, 'Gertrude, my dear, will you have me?' But as it is, it would be presumption in me to think of you. You are endowed with wealth and a luxurious home, I have nothing but what I owe to you. It would be unjust in me to drag you down, even if I had the power, to my own level. In the present state of society it is considered by no means necessary for people who love each other to marry, unless their circumstances as well as their dispositions harmonize; and the result, unfortunately, in too many cases is that people are matched but not mated, and that happiness is sacrificed at Mammon's altar. But if I go on talking in this manner you'll think me very serious or very absurd."

"Do you think money the one thing needful?" she asked, looking me earnestly in the face.

"I think it one of the needful things of married as well as single life. The proverb tells us, that when poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window; but it is by no means the only or the principal thing necessary to the enjoyment of the nuptial state. Better is a crust, sweetened with peace and contentment, than a feast embittered by domestic discomfort.

And enough is as good as a feast. I am sermonizing, you will perceive."

"You speak like a philosopher," she replied, with affected buoyancy. "I hope you don't think me mercenary."

"No, indeed; you must know that I know you too well to think that. You are one of the most self-sacrificing, generous, unselfish creatures in the world."

"Well, then, why did you speak about money?"

"Why did I wish that I had a hundred thousand a year? Oh! because that's a nice income to have, and it would enable me to do so much more than I can now; not indeed that I am the least dissatisfied with my lot; on the contrary, I have every reason to be proud and grateful. But, Gertrude, you have made me ambitious. You may guess in what direction that ambition lies. As I said before, if I were a rich man, I would offer *my* hand—for my heart you know you already have; but being a poor one, if the offer ever is made, it must come from you."

"I didn't mean to have you speak in this manner," she said, with emotion, which brought moisture to her eyes; "you always take things in such a matter-of-fact way."

There was a child-like simplicity about her which was more fascinating than her beauty; and as I took her hand, and she sank sobbing on my shoulder, I felt unmanned, and as if I had done some great wrong. I had handled the sensitive plant with too rude a touch. What should I do in atonement? I stooped and kissed her.

"Is it mine?" I said, taking her hand.

She replied by a pressure of my own, and silence gave consent.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUNSHINE AND CLOUDS.

It was arranged between us, before the close of the interview last referred to, that Gertrude should declare our state of feeling to her father, and submit the matter for his consideration. Accordingly, when, two evenings afterwards, I called to see her, she had a message for me. Her father, desired to see me, up-stairs.

I found him seated alone in the same room, where, before entering his employ, he had given me his advice regarding my future conduct in life. I entered his presence not entirely without gloomy forebodings, but his friendly manner soon reassured me.

“Washington,” he began, “I wish to say a few words to you on an important subject. My daughter tells me that she has a great affection for you, and that you are equally attached to her. In other words, I suppose my consent is asked to your marriage. I have, of course, my duties as a father to fulfil; but I am unwilling to oppose her choice in the selection of a husband. You have no money beyond what you earn, it is true, but I believe you to be well meaning and of good moral character; and, therefore, to cut the matter short, I give my consent to your engagement. You are still very young, and there is no particular hurry about fixing the wedding-day. But remember, that in giving you the hand of my only living child, I saddle you with a great responsibility. Her happiness is dear to me, and if I did not think it would be to her welfare to marry you, I would withhold my consent. As you have not the means to support her in the manner in which she has been accustomed to live, I shall make proper provision for her when the time comes. But of that we can say more hereafter. Only promise to take good care of her, and I shall be satisfied. If your affection is sincere, and you act right, I think the marriage may be a good thing for you both.”

I assured him that I should cherish her as the apple of my eye, and hold her dearer than life itself.

The great aspiration of my life was realized! I became imbued with holy feelings; for assuredly the love of a virtuous woman is purifying, elevating, ennobling to man, above all else. My first, my only love, had been requited, and I was blessed. Had I been a Turk, I should have muttered thanks to Allah, and crossed myself in prayer. But custom is law; and not being a Turk, or in Turkey, (where it is expected that we should do as the Turks do,) I did neither. But I was grateful, delighted, and jubilant, over my good fortune. The hand of the only woman whom I ever loved was precious to me beyond all price. It was the one thing which made my life valuable; without her, the world would have been a wilderness to me. The boon was more than I had a right to expect, but heart responded to heart too warmly to permit of estrangement. By first impressions, as well as familiar association, our souls had become linked too intimately together to permit of isolation without a struggle. Our natural affinities were too strong to enable us to suffer estrangement without pain. What the Siamese twins would suffer physically, by separation, we should have suffered mentally. How joyous and gladdening then, to me, this reciprocity of affection, this unity of hearts! I say hearts, because the sense is well understood, and that is exactly the sense I mean to convey; but in reality the heart is no more the seat of feeling than the right or the left thumb, or the middle finger. So too, of the spleen, and much beside; such allusions have their foundation in vulgar errors.

I was happy—ah! how happy; I well remember. The memory of that halcyon season is still vivid, but I cannot think of it now without a tear; and this is not unmanly mourning.

And why?

Ah! what floods of thought rush tumultuously to my heated brain, as I write! God help me!

Yet I did no wrong; but to be esteemed guilty, is to be guilty to mortal eyes.

“Of what?”

My enemy the cashier wove around me the meshes of de-

struction. He conceived a dislike for me. I had rightly apprehended that he had a son of his own, whom he wished to place in the bank in my stead. He used his own guilt to accomplish his purpose. He had embezzled money belonging to the bank, and he strove to fasten the crime upon me. He hinted his suspicions to Mr. Morgan, and filled that gentleman's mind with grave doubts. I was immaculate, but what of that? The breath of calumny went abroad. I was tabooed in the office, but not discharged. Mr. Morgan was loth to act without proof. I was the only one, beside the cashier, who had access to the key of the safe. He reported that he had missed small amounts from time to time, and that he had resolved to place marked coins in the way of the transgressor. To this plan of discovery Mr. Morgan assented. Meanwhile I noticed a great coldness in his manner towards me, and I suspected that something was wrong, as much as he suspected that I had been doing wrong.

"Have you change for a ten-dollar-bill?" said the cashier to me one day, when I was on the eve of taking my departure.

"I think so," I said; and I withdrew my pocket-book from the breast-pocket of my coat, where I was always accustomed to carry it, and counted out one five-dollar piece, and two two-and-a-half-dollar pieces.

"Stay here a moment," said he, and he walked into Mr. Morgan's private office, and in a few moments returned with that gentleman.

"Mr. Edmonds," began the latter, "I'm very sorry to say that you are suspected of robbing the safe."

I turned pale with indignation and mortification, and for a moment I stood in speechless astonishment. Figuratively speaking, I had been struck by a thunderbolt.

"I'm surprised at what you say," I replied, when words came to my relief; "the suspicion is entirely false."

"Mr. Perkins has reported to me, on several occasions during the last few weeks, that he has missed small sums of money; and in order to discover the delinquent, he marked some five and two-and-a-half-dollar pieces, and put them in the safe; and two of those coins—a five and a two-and-a-half—you have just given him, in change of a ten-dollar note."

"The money I gave him was part of my last month's salary," I replied.

"Look at those marks," he continued, pointing out a scratch like the letter X on each of the coins."

"Mark or no mark," I said, "I came by the money honestly; and Mr. Perkins accuses me falsely, and I believe he knows it too."

Mr. Perkins twitched his eye-brows and lip, and his cadaverous countenance warmed up for a moment. Then he darted at me an angry scowl, which I met with a proud look of defiance and contempt, inspired by conscious honesty, and a feeling of injured innocence. But the mere sense of being placed in the assumed position of a thief—the robber of my benefactor and intended father-in-law—embarrassed and confused me, and a flood of bitter thoughts rushed across my heated brain. "O God! that I should have come to this!" I mentally ejaculated, and I stamped my foot with rage, and my eyes flashed fire upon my guilty accuser.

"Sir," I said, turning to the cashier, and my face flushed with anger as I spoke, "You either knowingly do me a wrong, that the Almighty if not man will punish you for, or you labor under a grave mistake. Which is it?" and my teeth ground.

"I only know that I marked those coins, and put them in the safe the day before yesterday; and I missed them this morning."

"You lie!" I exclaimed; and with an uncontrollable impulse of revenge I sprang at his throat.

"Stay, stay, Sir!" said Mr. Morgan, laying his hand on me.

I relaxed my hold that instant, and fell back panting with emotion. I was sorry for what I had done, and said apologetically: "Excuse me—I regret my indiscretion."

It was the first time I had ever raised my hand against my fellow-man, but I had never received such aggravation before. If this man's word was believed I was ruined, and all that I held dearest in life was lost to me for ever.

My brow was cold, and beaded with drops. My limbs trembled, not with fear but anger. I was determined that falsehood should not triumph, for want of a denial from me.

The cashier eyed me with a hawk-like glance, and as if he

would have gladly plunged a dagger into my breast. I repelled him with a look of scorn.

Fortunately the business of the bank was over for the day, and all but two of the clerks had gone away ; so we had the field pretty much to ourselves, and I felt more at liberty to speak and act than if we had been more liable to interruption. That either the cashier or I was doomed, so far as the bank was concerned, after what had just passed, I was certain. It was now a struggle between truth and falsehood, between honesty and villainy. But what could I do or say to prove the one or disprove the other? Mere assertion I knew would go for little or nothing under such circumstances ; for Mr. Morgan had always placed unlimited confidence in Mr. Perkins. The proof against me, I saw, appeared only too strong to be affected by a mere denial. But its very seeming conclusiveness exasperated me the more, and added fuel to the terrible fire of my indignation.

Mr. Morgan withdrew, and bade me follow him into his private office. He closed the door, and addressed me solemnly, with tears in his eyes. " Washington, I am sorry for you. Although Mr. Perkins's suspicions were directed towards you I was loth to share them. I struggled against the idea of possible dishonesty on your part. I had too much friendship for you to form a judgment without evidence, although as you were the only one besides Mr. Perkins who had rightful access to the key of the safe, I considered that his suspicions were not altogether unreasonable. But I must say that I was anxious to find out, and it was with my knowledge that Mr. Perkins placed the marked coins in the safe. They have been missed, and are now found in your possession ; there is only one inference to be drawn from that, and denial is useless. Confession is good for the soul ; and I candidly assure you, that if you will speak the truth, and shame the devil, I will forgive you ; although, of course, you must leave the bank forthwith, and terminate all association with my family in future. Not a word shall be said about this discovery, and in some new field you may profit by the warning you have received. Ah ! Washington, if you had only followed my advice, you would never have been in such a posi-

tion as this. I'm sorry for you ; very sorry, indeed, God help you !”

He paused for my reply.

“I have only to repeat what I just said, in your presence, to Mr. Perkins. I protest, before heaven, that I am innocent. Sir, you do me a wrong in believing him. He is my enemy, and he lies.”

“Come, come, I can't listen to such language as that,” he replied, hastily ; “I have the fullest confidence in his honesty and veracity.”

“Are you sure,” I asked, “that it is not misplaced ?”

“I cannot disbelieve what he says.”

“Then,” I exclaimed, “I am lost !” and placing both arms on the railing of his desk, I buried my face in my hands, and shed the bitterest tears that ever trickled from human eyes.

He was not unmoved, but he merely repeated those hopeless, discouraging words, “I am sorry for you ;” and they fell upon my ear like a knell.

“Mr. Perkins will pay you the balance of salary due you,” he observed, when I looked up ; and I staggered out of the room, and into the street, like a drunken man, without uttering another word.

CHAPTER XV.

WOMAN'S LOVE.

When I collected my scattered senses, my first impulse was to proceed direct to Union Square, and confer with Gertrude—the one woman whose love was dearer to me than all the world beside, and which if lost would leave me desolate and despairing indeed.

If she turned against me in my hour of suffering, then adieu to existence ; life would have no longer a charm for me, it

would be unbearable. Death would beckon me to its embrace, and I would gladly follow. Suicide would afford me that relief which society refused.

I walked through Wall Street towards Broadway, with flaming eyes and a spirit too impatient to allow me to enter an omnibus, and too sorrowing to face the cold, hard, unsympathizing gaze of strangers. Gradually my pace quickened, and I continued walking rapidly till I reached Union Square. Almost breathless I knocked at the door, and the next minute I was alone with my betrothed.

"Gertrude," I said, as she entered the parlor, "I have met with a terrible misfortune. I have been accused by Mr. Perkins of stealing money from the bank-safe, and your father believes him."

Her eyes dilated, she grew pale, and clutched my arm nervously.

"How excited you are, my dear!" she said, endeavoring to calm me. "How false! Surely, father won't."

"He does. But you know I'm innocent."

A thought suddenly flashed upon me, and I started as if from a dream.

"Ah! I know now," I exclaimed with a grim and I fear savage look of triumph.

"What, what!" she inquired, clasping my hand, and looking up inquiringly and anxiously into my face.

"I left my coat—this coat"—and I clutched it with my hand, "hanging up in the office when I went out to-day, and ah! I know it now, my pocket-book was in it; I always carry it in the inside breast-pocket, and the wretch who accuses me substituted his two marked coins for two of those that were in it, on purpose to make me appear guilty. Villain! I know now. What a wonder I didn't think of it before! I'll wait till your father comes home, and tell him."

I paused.

"What a wicked man! he was always your enemy, Washington," said Gertrude, crying.

"You don't believe me guilty, do you?" I said.

"O darling! no. How can you ask me such a question? And I'm sure my father won't when he knows."

She buried her face in my breast, and bitterly shared my grief. The next moment her father entered the room.

"Gertrude," he said, in a peremptory tone, quite unusual with him, and without taking the slightest notice of me, "I wish to see you up-stairs."

"Now, father?"

"Yes, at once."

"Wait a moment, and I'll be down again," she said to me as she obeyed the summons.

For nearly a quarter of an hour I was left alone, restlessly pacing that front-parlor in the twilight of an April day, under the burden of my broken spirit, and with an almost agonizing sense of injury and degradation. What to me availed my innocence, if I was believed to be guilty by him who was my judge? I had no power to appeal from earth to the court of Heaven to establish the fact. I was the victim of circumstantial evidence—the most difficult of all to disprove, and especially when sustained by a lying tongue. Hours seemed to have elapsed before Gertrude returned, sobbing, to my embrace.

"Well?" I said.

She made no reply, but clung closer to me.

Then she said in broken accents: "Whatever happens, Washington, remember that I shall remain unchanged." Emotion choked her utterance, but in a few moments she resumed: "I told my father what you said, but he would hardly listen to me. He seems to have credited that wicked man's story."

While she spoke footsteps descended the stairs, and Mr. Morgan re-appeared. I knew that he would have only chilling words for me, if I allowed him to speak first, so I said, as calmly as I could, "Mr. Morgan, I think I know how those coins came into my possession, if indeed they were the marked coins that you say were put into the safe the night before last;" and I described to him how I had left my walking-coat, with my pocket-book containing my money in it, hanging up in the office, while I went out for a few minutes in the office-coat I was always accustomed to wear during business hours, and my belief that Mr. Perkins had substituted his marked coins for my own.

"I should be sorry to suspect you falsely," he replied, "but I cannot harbor such a suspicion as you would lead me to, against Mr. Perkins. What motive could he have for injuring you, or doing a despicable act of that kind?"

"It may be to conceal his own dishonesty," I replied, "and an injury to me would always have been a gratification to him. He was my enemy all through. How much does he say he's missed?"

"Well, that's neither here nor there. He supposes about five hundred dollars."

"It may be five thousand," I remarked, "and he may have embezzled it."

"You have no right to speak against my cashier's character in that way, Sir."

"Circumstances alter cases," I said, "and where a man has wilfully endeavored to prove an honest man guilty, the accused has a right to retaliate on the principle of self-preservation, just as you would have a right to defend yourself against the assaults of an assassin."

"Yes; but in this case the question is, has Mr. Perkins endeavored to prove you guilty, knowing you to be innocent?"

"I solemnly believe that he has."

"Well, there is no use in making these assertions, for, after all, they are but words. I am sorry to have had cause to change my opinion of you, but so it is."

"Many an innocent man," I said, "has been hanged upon circumstantial evidence, but in my case there is no conclusive circumstance proven. Those two marked coins which Mr. Perkins says he placed in the safe, and which I gave him in change for the note, may have been among those paid to me as my last month's salary. The man who would assert a lie to injure another, would hesitate at nothing to accomplish his purpose. But this I will confidently say, that if he did not mark those pieces before paying them to me, he or some one else substituted them for similar coins of my own, while I was out to-day."

Still Mr. Morgan showed no signs of conviction.

Gertrude, who had been listening anxiously to the conversation, now came forward, and said imploringly:

"Father, he's innocent; I'm sure he is."

"Keep quiet, my dear," and he put her back.

Then turning to me, he said: "Mr. Edmonds, I'm sorry for you, but the thing is unfortunately too conclusive. Let us have no further conversation on the subject. I have already told you that I shall not prosecute, nor injure you in any way, but I must insist upon your severing your connection with my family. If it's painful to you, I'm sure it's even more so to me and my daughter."

Gertrude sobbed, and buried her face in her handkerchief, as she stood at her father's side.

"That's all I have to say," he concluded, and was about to leave the room, when my good companion and brave defender exclaimed: "If you desert him, father, I won't," and she threw her arms round me. "He's innocent; I know he is."

This display of devotion won his admiration in spite of himself, and to spare his own feelings he quitted the room.

"You are innocent; I know you are," she repeated, "but even if you were not, all the world could not tear me from you."

I pressed my lips to her brow. Then there came a faint murmur, "Washington, dearest," and I found her swooning in my arms.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE MIDST OF MY DISTRACTION I WRITE A LETTER.

When a young man of acute sensibilities suddenly finds himself alone with a beautiful girl fainting in his arms, his position, even if she be his betrothed, as in my case, is decidedly interesting. The novelty of the situation, the surprise, and the uncertainty what to do first, absorb his whole attention, very naturally creating anxiety, coupled with the most tender sympathy for the lady. It requires tact, delicacy, and a certain amount of moral courage to make him fully equal to the

emergency, so that he may acquit himself gracefully, and at the same time promptly render his charge all proper assistance to hasten her recovery.

When I found myself as described at the end of the last chapter, I experienced a shock which instantly aroused me to a new sense of responsibility. I felt that I had another depending upon me for support, in the most literal acceptation of the words, and, what was worse, I knew that I was the cause of her swooning. In a moment I forgot the painful subject which had brought me to the house and tears to her eyes, and thought only of her whose enduring love alone made my life valuable.

I tried to remain calm, but the mental excitement under which I had previously labored hardly allowed me to do so. I was overcome with a sensation of distress, which for a few seconds rendered me incapable of doing more than sustain her. I stood fixed in the centre of the room gazing earnestly into her livid face, as she clung with her arms upon my shoulders, her head thrown back, and her eyes closed. I felt her weight gradually press more upon me, till she sank like a lifeless body in my embrace.

I spoke to her, I appealed to her, but there was no response. I kissed her, I pressed her hand, I tried to feel her pulse, but I shook like an aspen-leaf, and was unable to keep my finger on her wrist. I summoned strength and courage enough to carry her to a sofa, on which I placed her in a reclining posture, with her head low, and her face looking upward. Then I opened both the windows, and the room-door, and from a silver pitcher in the hall procured a glass of water. Kneeling by her side, I chafed her cold hands, and tried to whisper her back to consciousness; and just as I was on the point of rising to ring the bell for assistance, to my joy she gave signs of recovery. Her hand clasped mine, her lips moved, her eyes again revealed their blue.

My heart beat quicker with delight, and I addressed her in tones tremulous with emotion, and when she murmured in reply, my soul was comforted. Only those who have adored and been adored can appreciate the ecstasy of relief that I then felt. My life-star was again in the ascendant.

"Only a little faintness," she said with feeble utterance, and I assisted her to rise.

Her color gradually returned, and I held the glass to her lips while she drank. There was a ring of the door-bell, and her mother entered the room.

"Well, good-by," I said, preparing to leave.

"Stay, stay! let me speak to mother," and the poor girl made a painful effort to recover herself.

"No, no; rest yourself," I replied. "I will come again."

"What's the matter, my dear?" asked Mrs. Morgan, turning to her daughter, after shaking hands with me with her usual warmth.

"A great misfortune has overtaken me," I exclaimed, "and the excitement has been too much for Gertrude. I'm sorry to say that I'm ruined, and that through no fault of my own, but the machinations of Mr. Perkins, the cashier. I'll leave Gertrude to tell you the rest, when she feels able. All that I have to say now is, that I am innocent of the crime of which I have been accused, and I only pray that the truth will out some day, and convince Mr. Morgan that I have not been the ungrateful thief he thinks me."

She was dumb with surprise; pallor overspread her features, and, trembling, she sat down. Irresolute what to think, she addressed a few words of inquiry to her daughter, and then went up-stairs, to learn more from her husband. Before she returned I took an affectionate leave of Gertrude, and left the house, promising to call on the morrow. I left the boarding-house that night, for Mr. Johnson, being still in the bank, of course knew of the accusation against me, and with melancholy feelings I took possession of a room in an hotel, taking care to leave my new address at my old home, to avoid an appearance of secreting myself.

All hope of establishing my innocence failed me, and I directed my thoughts to my future career in life. My bright and joyous anticipation of marrying the woman I loved, which had so long turned the world into paradise, and made my existence happy, it would be unjust for me any longer to entertain. It would be wrong for me, disgraced as I was, to accept the still willing hand of one who would have nothing but

disgrace to reap from the union. No; I was too manly to profit by her love for me, to do her a social injury. Better for her to endure disappointment, bitter though it might be, than gratify feeling at the expense of interest. Yet my grief for her was infinitely greater than the sorrow I felt over my own misfortune. It required more effort than most men could have made, struggling against a strong, deep, ardent attachment as I was, to reconcile myself to her loss; but a sense of duty came to my aid, and told me that I would best show my love for her by tearing myself away. And it cost me agony and tears to make the sacrifice.

I would not even go again to the house in Union Square, as I had promised; I would write instead, and avoid if possible inflicting upon her the pain of a parting scene. With glistening eyes I sat down and wrote:

“ — Hotel, Thursday Night.

“ My Dear Gertrude,—It is with a heavy heart that I take up the pen to-night. The loss of fortune and of friends is nothing to me compared to the loss of you; and I feel that I must bear that loss, however heart-rending it may be. You may imagine how much I suffer at the thought; but, Gertrude, I owe you a duty, and it is a sense of this which compels me to give up hope and destroy my own happiness to secure your future welfare. I know, dearest, how warmly you share the life-long love I feel for you, and it was only a few hours ago that you told me, that whether innocent or not your affection would remain unchanged, and all the world could not tear me from you. But it would be a sad thing for you to marry a man discharged from your father's employ, under the circumstances which transpired to-day. Although your father has promised to remain silent as to the cause of my leaving the bank, it is only natural to suppose that many of your friends will become cognizant of it. They will know nothing of my innocence, and of course believe that the accusation against me was proved beyond a doubt. Considering that your father thinks me guilty, he has shown great forbearance in promising not to prosecute; but if it were not for your sake, and the unpleasant publicity it would create, I should at once insist upon a trial, or commence an action for defamation of character.

against my traducer. Unfortunately the evidence, when sustained by a lying tongue, is so clear that, notwithstanding my innocence, I might be found guilty, for you well know the law is not always just, and Wrong often triumphs over Right in its decrees. But I will bear the sacrifice, and resign myself to the cruel dispensations of fate; and it may be that remorse will at some future time extort a death-bed confession of the truth from the lips which have borne false witness against a neighbor. I am withered up by this calamity, in the summer of my youth; my grief chokes me; and my journey to the grave will certainly be shortened by this terrible blow. I do not expect to live long; and without you life will no longer have a charm for me. My unsatisfied love for you will kill me. Even now I hesitate between hope and despair—the uncertain future and sudden death. Ah! I never thought of that before. But I banish it! suicide is only the refuge of cowards. I will live, but God help me!

“I will leave the country as soon as possible, probably by Saturday’s steamer for Liverpool. I think I shall go to Australia, and commence a new career there. A ray of hope flashes across my mind; I may make a fortune, and you may join me there. But how vain! it may never be realized! I may die on the gold-fields; and you—why should I think of inflicting upon you such banishment? No, no; alas! it can never be. O Gertrude! dear, if you only knew how my brain reels, and how badly I feel for your sake, you would pity me.

“I have seven hundred dollars saved from my earnings, and this, with economy, will enable me to get there; but I must not delay my departure. I do not like to call at the house, after what your father said to me; it might be very unpleasant for us both; and under the distressing circumstances of the case, you will not fail to understand the feeling of pride and delicacy which actuates me. I shall instead look for you in the Square, at three in the afternoon. Good-night, dearest.

“Your unhappy but loving,

“WASHINGTON.”

I was in Union Square at the appointed time, and she came out to welcome me, looking pale and sad, but still loving and beautiful.

"O Washington! how could you write me such a letter?"

"I felt it to be a duty I owed you to release you from an engagement which your father has cancelled, and it would be your ruin to fulfil. God knows every word I wrote cost me a pang."

"I can never give you up, Washington; you know I can never love any one but you; and if it is only your misfortune at the bank that troubles you, there need be no change. Wherever you go, I am willing to go."

"But, my dear Gertrude, remember that I am unable to support you. I can suffer poverty, and fight the battle of life alone, but you, accustomed as you are to a life of ease and refinement, would find it far harder. It would be a crime for me to take you away from your own elegant home to share the lot of one so poor and disgraced as myself."

"I do not consider you disgraced," she replied, "I consider that Mr. Perkins is the person really disgraced, and I told father so this morning. And I would rather have a crust with you than a feast away from you. It was cruel of you to say you were going to England on Saturday. What should I do without you? Promise me that you won't go," and she fixed her bright blue eyes upon me in eloquent appeal.

I pressed her hand, and tears welled up into her eyes.

"I'm afraid," I replied, "that if you cast your lot with mine now, you will live to regret it. Not indeed for want of any thing I can do to promote your happiness; I am sure two souls were never more closely united than ours are; but, Gertrude, you don't calculate the hardships inseparable from poverty, nor the many vicissitudes to which we should be liable. I love you too much not to tell you how deeply you might suffer. Besides, think of your duty to your parents. For you to elope with a man you are forbidden to marry, would be to sacrifice your own reputation, and make them miserable. Such a *mesalliance* would be a source of extreme mortification to them, and you would never be forgiven. But wait till I see what I can do in Australia, and then ——"

"I would care nothing for such a loss of reputation as that," she replied. Indeed, "I don't know but what I would be rather proud of it than otherwise; the Bible tells me that I may for-

sake father and mother, and cleave unto my husband. I should break my heart in a month, if you went away and left me behind. I know I should."

"Your father," I said, "has insisted upon my terminating all intercourse with his family; but, notwithstanding, I should feel perfectly justified in marrying you if my character was free from blemish, and I was certain of the means to support you."

"I wish I had a fortune in my own right," she resumed. "Ah! what a master money is! we are all slaves to it. But what made you think of going away so soon? Why not try to refute the accusation of the cashier, and convince father that he wronged you?"

"Alas! both, I am sorry to say, are equally impossible. Nothing but a confession of the truth on the part of Mr. Perkins, will ever restore to me my stolen reputation, and that is very unlikely ever to occur. If he ever does confess, it will be when he is sick and in prison, when he has lost his own reputation beyond the hope of recovery, and remorse strikes terror into his stony heart on the brink of eternity." I clenched my teeth in the bitter sense of the injury I had suffered.

Gertrude knew, from what I had said on the previous day, that I suspected the cashier of embezzlement, and that his motive in accusing me was to cover the pecuniary deficit caused by his own guilt.

"You take too gloomy a view of things," observed Gertrude sadly, and I detected a tear trickling down her cheek.

"Well, think over what I've been saying, my love, and I'll promise not to do any thing you don't wish." And so we parted with fond and lingering looks, arranging to meet again at the same hour and place on the morrow.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LONG FAREWELL.

We met. She wore a placid look of resignation, and her eyes were less drooping than on the previous day; but traces of sorrow were still visible—alas! to me but too plainly—in that face into which I had gazed so often and so long, as into a mirror, seeing there her soul's reflected light; for she had one of those countenances which indicate transparency of character, and I could read her mind through those jewels of vision, which were never bent upon me but in fondness.

“Well,” she began, “I lay awake all last night, thinking about you.”

I condoled with her on the loss of her rest.

“And,” (emotion overcame her, and she wept,) “Washington, I'll do whatever you say is for the best. I've had a hard struggle, but——”

I divined her meaning. She would let me go; but ah! how it wrung her heart to say so.

We met on the next morning by appointment, at eleven, and drove together to the pier at the North River, where lay the steamer that was to bear me away at noon. It was a sad time for us both, and I bitterly shared with her the grief of parting.

“Here,” she said, handing me a small package, “take this, but don't open it till you get to sea. It's something I want you to have with you particularly. And now, mind and write me as soon as you arrive, and as often after as you can. I shall be dying to hear from you.”

This promise I was only too glad to give, and I exacted a corresponding one in return. Then she sank sobbing into my embrace, and I tried in vain to calm her.

“I would give the world to go with you,” she said, when her power of speech returned; “I don't think I shall live long after you have gone. Why can't you stay? Shall I go with

you? I will if you say so. O Washington, my dear! what will become of me?" And again she found relief in tears.

Even now I hesitated whether to go or stay.

The pain of parting was almost too much for my endurance. But my passage-money was paid, and my baggage already on board; and why go back? I was ruined in my own land; why, therefore, linger on its shores? and, as I decided to go, the sooner I went the better. The sorrow of separation would be just as bitter at any future time, and every week's delay in the work of carving out for myself a new career in another clime, would be so much time lost. A sense of duty compelled me to stifle inclination, and, for the sake of ultimate good, to tear myself away from all that I held dearest on earth.

We alighted from the carriage at the pier; and, at her own request, she accompanied me on board, and into my state-room, where she buried her face in the pillow of my berth, and consecrated it with her tears and a fervent prayer for Almighty protection. Poor girl! she needed it as much as I did. The steamer's bell rang for the friends of passengers to go ashore; the last broken utterances of breaking hearts, the last fond kiss and warm embrace were exchanged, and I escorted her, trembling, to the carriage in waiting.

Another tender farewell and pressure of the hand; another "good-by, love;" another burst of grief, a flutter of the handkerchief, and the parting was over.

With a heaving breast, and a sense of suffocation, I staggered back to the gang-way, which was just being taken in; and, reaching the deck, turned my face towards the bay, and cried bitterly.

Slowly the vessel moved from the dock. I turned again to the shore. The carriage had been drawn up to the end of the pier, and a white signal fluttered from its window, to which I made answer as the steamer shot past into the stream; and my eyes lingered on it with melancholy joy, till it became indistinct in the distance, and the pier finally disappeared from the view. I took a last long lingering look at the fading glories of the prospect; at the bay thickly dotted with vessels, and ferry-boats shooting to-and-fro between New York and the various points of Staten Island and New Jersey; at the mouth of the Hudson, through which I saw, in fancy, almost as far as the

Palisades; at the great city, with its busy wharves and tall church-spires; at the forest of masts which darkened the East River, and proclaimed the commerce of the port; at the frowning batteries, and the smiling villas on Brooklyn Heights—till one and all grew dim and vanished.

Then I carefully opened the package she had given me, and found it to contain, to my surprise, three hundred dollars in gold; and, in addition, a Roman scarf and pin; her daguerreotype in a locket; a small, elegantly bound copy of the Bible, with clasps, on the fly-leaf of which she had inscribed, "From Gertrude to Washington;" and the following verses, in her own hand-writing:

"Farewell, and for ever, each bright dream is o'er;
We have met—we have loved—but we'll never meet more.
The lone heart may weep, but its tears shall be vain:
Those dear hours of rapture return not again.

Farewell, and for ever!

"As the streams of Aurora, illumining the night,
Or the last lingering blushes of evening's fond light,
Our hopes were too brilliant, our love was too pure,
Our joy—for a cold world—too sweet to endure.

Farewell, and for ever!

"When the soul we adore to its home must return,
We may still bless the ashes that hallow the urn;
But when fond ones are severed, ere dull life be flown,
Love's ashes are woe-brooding phantoms alone.

Farewell, and for ever!

"Though the winter of age may seem gloomy and dead—
Since our feelings decline as our summers are shed—
Yet, 'tis naught to that winter the young heart sustains,
When each dear wish denied, still each feeling remains.

Farewell, and for ever!—each bright dream is o'er,

We have met—we have loved—but we'll never meet
more."

Why this apparent despair? My cheek grew blanched, my hands cold, and I trembled as I read. We had parted, it is true, "it might be for years, it might be for ever." But

why abandon hope? All partings are not for ever, nor do all part to meet again; and the uncertainties of life defy calculation. We part for an hour, it may be for eternity; we part for years, and yet meet again. Poor girl! she had given way to despondency. Another pang! another spasm of the heart! My eyes seemed bursting from their sockets, and I stood like a maniac on the heaving deck, gazing with a wild and vacant stare towards the horizon, where sky and ocean met like lovers' lips, to limit the circle of vision. Ah! that terrible, heart-breaking sense of hopelessness and desolation! Were we, indeed, never to meet again? My mind was a weird phantasmagoria of thoughts, which chased each other in bewildering confusion. I gasped for breath.

Gradually I grew calmer; fortitude returned; my thoughts became less incoherent, and I began to reason. The verses were the emanation of a despairing heart, but time, the great healer, would revive that drooping spirit; and from the ashes of buried hopes, new ones would arise. The tree of love might yet blossom into marriage; and "all's well that ends well."

I was rather sorry that she had given me money, but I accepted it nevertheless in a proper spirit of gratitude; determined, however, at some time, to return it to her with interest. I wore a watch-chain made of her hair, and carried her miniature in my pocket; and I kissed them both in token of my heartfelt appreciation of her affectionate forethought and goodness; and deeply and sadly I mourned the misfortune that had torn me from her side, and cast me once more adrift on the world. But I had still a guiding star to cheer me on; and so long as that remained in view, I should not despair.

For days, I was so prostrated by heart-sickness, as to be unable to read, write, or even converse. When I spoke it was in monosyllables; and whenever I left my state-room, which was seldom, I studiously avoided the society of my fellow-passengers. I found relief in looking upward at the stars, and downward into the troubled waters of a stormy ocean; but man could afford me no consolation. As the voyage wore on, however, and skies brightened, and winds lulled, I recovered somewhat from this terrible depression of spirits, and found relief in writing to the woman I loved.

Then, too, I began to reproach myself for quitting New York so abruptly. Had I not been guilty of folly in so doing, besides inflicting needless pain upon *her*? Had the blind rashness of youth not converted me into a monster of cruelty? Why, Oh why, did I leave her? But alas! too late, too late! My reflections only added to my own misery.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MY FELLOW-TRAVELLER.

It was not till within four days of our arrival in the *Mersey*, that I made the acquaintance of a tall, fair-complexioned, brown-eyed, delicate-featured young Englishman, of about twenty-eight, who wore his hair, which was straight, fine, glossy, and longer than the fashion, parted in the middle. His epic face attracted me, and I regarded him from the first as a superior being to most men. If I had been asked to pick a genius out of the crowd on board, I should have selected him without a moment's hesitation; if a man of cultivation and refinement, the same. This impression only increased as I became more familiar with him. He was returning from a three months' tour of the United States and British Provinces, to take passage by the next Australian steamer calling at the Cape. There he proposed to have a little lion-shooting, and afterwards proceed to Australia, and from that to India—just to see the world, and enjoy sport.

In the course of conversation he communicated his reasons for travelling, and his views of society, in something like the following language:

“I felt a longing for change. I was wearied of London drawing-rooms; wearied of Rotten Row; wearied of the streets and of the people; wearied of club life; wearied of public amusements and my own idleness. For me the Park had lost its charm; and the languid indifference I felt towards society,

made me slow to appreciate even the belles of their first season. I walked through a quadrille with the air of a man suffering from *ennui*, and looked upon the opera as a bore only to be endured occasionally.

“I had even become incapable of enjoying the flower-shows at the Botanic Gardens; but I attended them, because I considered they were things to be done just as much as walking or riding over to hear the band play in the Kensington Gardens, on Tuesdays and Fridays, during the summer; or going to the Royal Academy on the opening day of the exhibition. I was tired of small talk, and the formalities of dinner-parties; tired of the women who had nothing to say, and of the women who had too much to say about nothing; tired of being wedged between two great walls of crinoline at dinner; tired of the powdered and liveried lacquey standing behind my chair, who listened to, and doubtless criticised every word I said, and kept a strict watch over my knife and fork; tired of the cold formalities of the drawing-room after dinner, and the dull stereotyped remarks uttered in my hearing day after day, and the irksome conventionalities of life generally. I was becoming thoroughly *blase*, and looked to travel for relief. I felt that I had used up London, and that now London was using up me. I was alone in the midst of the crowd. My only real companions were my books. I was sick of the cold cynicism of some, and the empty frivolity of others; sick of the despotism of custom, more potent than law, which threatened the entire destruction of whatever individuality I possessed, and the effect of which I saw was to convert men into machines; sick of petty social ambition, and the spectacle of poverty struggling to keep up false appearances; sick of the tyranny of opinion, of religious cant, and religious intolerance; sick of the tinsel glitter of fashion, of mammas with marriageable daughters, always planning the conquest of elder sons, and of bachelors always on the look-out for ladies of fortune; sick of the heartlessness of those who feigned friendship, and of the pretensions of those who counterfeited aristocracy; sick of the women who kissed each other at one moment, and slandered each other the next; and of the people, and they were many, who would flatter to the face and vilify when the back was

turned ; sick of the pride which arrogantly asserted itself, and of the still greater pride that aped humility ; sick of the dissimulation which passed as a current coin among the leaders of *haut ton*, and of the sham, and the gilt gingerbread by which the reputation of so many was sustained ; sick of the worshippers of Mammon, and the sycophants who bent the knee to rank and power ; sick of the parasites, who, sacrificing their independence, clung tenaciously to their patronizing supporters ; sick of the coquetry of maids, and the intrigues of wives ; the blandishments of some, and the deceitfulness of many ; sick of the spurious and the base wherever found ; of selfishness and ostentatious charity ; of the manners and mannerisms of "snobs," and the illiterateness and affectations of "swells ;" sick of those who used religion to cloak their sins, and who were merciless towards all backsliders, till found out themselves ; sick of fashionable parsons, who looked upon the Church simply as a means of getting a *living*, and drawled out, "He that hath yahs to yah let him yah," without any concern for the good of souls ; sick of all these sins, vanities, and follies of people whose great aim in life was to disguise their real character, and assume a fictitious one ; to subvert nature, and become as artificial and incapable of strong feeling as possible ; to crush and stifle their own healthy human instincts ; to dwarf, if not entirely destroy, their own individuality ; to ignore the dictates of their own conscience, and to minister only to that inglorious trinity, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

"I knew, that, by leaving England, I would not be escaping all these vanities and vices ; for where circumstances correspond, human nature and human society are pretty much the same in spirit, if not in form, all the civilized world over ; but I should at least have change of scene, and a wider and newer field of observation ; I should be enabled to see nature and human nature under more varied aspects, and feel, if possible, a larger sympathy with my fellow-men, under all conditions of life. I should flourish and luxuriate, instead of vegetate ; and learn, if I had not already learned, to regard all countries and all creeds impartially. Not, indeed, that I was more prejudiced than any of my neighbors, the case was always the

reverse; nor that I was ever bigoted in religious matters, for all sects and all religions were ever alike to me; and I never thought the worse of a Hindu, because he was a Brahmin; or of a Scotchman, because he was a Presbyterian; or of a Welshman because he was a Methodist; or of an Irishman because he was a Roman Catholic; or of an Englishman, because he was High Church or Low Church; for liberty of thought and action in religious affairs I consider, as I always considered, to be one of the divine rights of man.

"I had travelled enough in books to have a vague idea of everything I was likely to see, wherever I might go; for I had always relieved my graver studies when a boy both at school and college, by the eager perusal of voyages and narratives of explorations and adventure; and what boy has not a relish for mental pabulum such as this? But that only whetted my appetite to learn more. A tour, too, that I had made with my father, of France, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland, when only twelve years old, had somewhat developed my natural desire to see the world.

"Most of my friends would have shrunk from the course I marked out for myself, and have regarded it as the worst use to which they could apply their money and their time; and we all know the proverb, which says, that 'a rolling stone gathers no moss.' But I looked upon it as a trifle; as for time, I was young; as for money, I could bear the loss of it.

" 'Join me in the grand tour,' said one. I gave a negative shake of the head.

" 'Take a run up the Rhine with us,' said another. I declined. No; there was nothing new and fresh enough for me in the Old World; I would go to the New, where society was younger, and nature more primeval. I even thought of travelling beyond the boundaries of civilization, and leading for a time the wild life of the aboriginal tribes I might meet with, sharing all the risks and hardships of their rude existence.

"The prospect of a few stirring adventures and hair-breadth escapes in any part of the world was decidedly stimulating. It would be something new to be 'stuck up' by bush-rangers in Australia, or attacked by banditti in Mexico; to have an en-

counter with a grizzly bear in California, or a tiger in Bengal ; to be threatened with hari-kari in Japan, or with being cooked and eaten in New Zealand. It would be, moreover, exceedingly interesting to have a conversation with a Hottentot at the Cape, and to introduce myself to the gorillas—at a respectful distance—as a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and a firm believer in every thing that Baron Munchausen had written about them in his celebrated travels in the gorilla country. It would be pleasant to sail up the Nile from Cairo to Benisooef, (and be cheated by a dragoman, of course); to scratch one's name on the top of the great pyramid, (under the false promise, made in consideration or *backsheesh*, that it would never be scratched out again), and then to take a look at the dancing dervishes. A glance at Niagara Falls would be refreshing, a buffalo-hunt on the prairies exciting, and a flirtation with a New York belle delightful—for a change."

"You are decidedly cosmopolitan and unconventional in your ideas," I observed. "It would be well for mankind if all had as much individuality as you possess."

"Yes; perhaps it would, for in proportion to the individuality of a nation, so has that nation been invariably great and powerful; and without individuality in the atoms you can not have it in the mass which those atoms compose; and without some individuality our civilization would die out altogether. We have an example of that in the Byzantine Empire."

Our acquaintance had progressed so satisfactorily that before the vessel reached port he urged me to take passage with him by the Australian steamer, instead of a sailing-vessel, as I had originally intended; and, delighted to have met with so agreeable a companion, I agreed to do so.

My first business after landing was to finish a very long letter to Gertrude, and then mail it at the general post-office, with my own hand. It took the form of a diary, and recorded thoughts more than incidents, and it breathed, more than I had ever dared to breathe to her by word of mouth, the love I bore her. I found that I could be far more eloquent with the pen than the tongue, and that absence only fanned the flame of that holy, sublime sentiment, which made all the world be-

side insignificant in comparison. No conventional attachment was ours; it was the welding together of two hearts—the blending together of two souls for life, come weal or woe. Courage returned to me, and I nerved myself anew for the battle of life. For her sake I would go forth and conquer. I needed no stronger bulwark than her love to defend me against every assailing wave in my journey over the sea of life. Up, then, and to action! The time for sorrowing was past. God helps those who help themselves, and, as Napoleon well said: “Heaven is on the side of the strongest artillery.” Despair vanished as a gourd before me, and hope once more kindled bright visions to allure me onward. I grew sanguine.

Meanwhile I anxiously awaited a letter from New York.

CHAPTER XIX.

MY FIRST INQUIRIES INTO THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

The great town of Liverpool served only to remind me of the bitter past, and the dark, damp days hung heavily upon me while I awaited the coming of the steamer which should bear me glad tidings from the woman I loved. The docks, with their ten miles of spars and rigging, were to my eyes as bleak and inhospitable as a forest of naked hickories; and the muddy, smoky, and noisy streets as prosaic as the looks of the busy toilers who trod them, with thoughts intent upon pig-iron, Russian hides, American cotton, and the multifarious commodities which are the growth of civilization, and with no soul above the counting-house. How I pitied them, poor and obscure as I was.

I began to hate the jingling roar of the lorries, to sicken of the murky sky, and to grow disheartened at the non-arrival of a letter as the days went by. And when a fortnight had elapsed without bringing any tidings from the New World, I became apprehensive and despairing. Had she changed, and were

those lines indeed to be interpreted as a final farewell, or had her letter been detained by accident, or could it be that she was ill? I pondered sadly over these thoughts, and many were the weary hours I passed in silent meditation.

While scanning the columns of a local newspaper one morning, I read a paragraph making mention of the arrival of a spiritual "medium" of whom I had before heard, but to whom I was entirely unknown, and as his address was given, I went to him, not because I had faith in spiritualism, for I knew nothing of it beyond hearsay; but in order to give it a trial. I introduced myself, as I entered his apartment, by saying: "I have come to ask you, or rather the spirits, a question."

He fixed his eyes upon me for a moment, and said: "You have come to ask about a living person in New York."

I looked amazed, but said nothing.

"She's a young lady with light brown hair, and she's sick of a fever. She's been so since you left New York. You've been expecting a letter from her, but she's not been able to write one. The spirits say that person will get better, and that you will marry her."

I was completely dumbfounded by these revelations, and but for the foolishness of the question, would have said: "How do you know?"

"Have you any more questions to ask the spirits about her?"

"Yes." I paused to reflect. "What has she been thinking about most during her sickness?"

The medium's hand trembled, and he took up a pencil and wrote very rapidly on a slip of paper, Washington.

"Do you know any thing about that?" he asked.

"Yes, I understand it," was my reply, and the old sense of suffocation and tears stole over me.

There, it seemed to me, was proof enough of the presence of the supernatural to convince the most incredulous. Can it be clairvoyance? I asked myself. If so, I stood in the presence of one who could penetrate my innermost thoughts; if not, I heard footfalls on the boundary of another world. In either case, the source of the power which enabled the medium to make these disclosures must be to some extent unknown to

himself. His own wonderful insight and utterances were perhaps almost as much a mystery to him as to me.

"Think of some one who's dead," he said, "and point with a pencil to the letters of the alphabet. When you come to the initial of the name, the spirit will answer."

I thought of my mother, and took the card-board on which these were printed in my hand, and commencing with *A*, touched them one by one in their proper order till I came to *Z*.

"Go over them again."

I did so, and the medium listened attentively.

"There is no answer," he said. "Are you sure that person is dead?"

I candidly informed him that I was not, but was anxious to ascertain.

He clutched my arm, saying as he did so, "I have an impression that the person you were thinking of is your mother; the spirits say she is still living," and he fixed his eyes upon me with a wild, supernatural look.

I grew pale, and felt a chill of astonishment.

"Think of some one else."

I thought of my father, and again pointed to the letters of the alphabet, but, as before, there was no answer.

"That spirit is still on earth," said the medium.

"I'd like to ask some questions about that person," I observed.

"The spirits tell me he's in New York, and you'll meet him unexpectedly."

Again I marvelled.

I put more questions, but the medium had no more impressions to communicate.

"Think of some one you know to be dead," said he, "and write down names of places, as many as you like, and among them the place where the person died."

I wrote, without allowing him to see what I wrote, about twenty names on as many slips of paper, each of which I then crushed into a pellet between my fingers, and placed in the centre of the table.

"Now point to the letters."

I did so, and at *D* three raps on the chair denoted the pre-

sence of the spirit. The medium pencilled, under inspiration, *Daniel E. Redfield*, and pushed it towards me. That was the name of the man I was thinking about.

“Now take up the papers one at a time, and when you touch that giving the name of the place where he died, his spirit will answer.”

One by one I lifted and separated them from the rest. As I raised the tenth pellet, the three raps were heard, and opening it, I read, *Brooklyn*. There he had died. Suddenly the medium again seized me spasmodically by the arm. “That spirit,” he said, “is standing here behind my chair. He is a short, stout man with a moustache, and he says he’ll write his initials on my arm.” The description of his appearance was correct. “He died an accidental death,” continued the medium. It was true; he was killed by being thrown out of a wagon. The medium bared his right arm more than half-way to the elbow, and rubbing the inner surface slightly with the palm of his left hand, there appeared in bright red letters, very much resembling the deceased’s own hand-writing, the letters *D. E. R.* These remained distinct for more than a minute, and then gradually faded away like a rainbow in the heavens. The medium sank back in his chair with a sigh and look of exhaustion.

I put the question, “Are you happy?” to the spirit, and the reply traced by the medium’s hand was: “Yes, I am.”

The interview terminated with the payment of a fee of five shillings sterling; and I left the house wondering and perplexed, and on the whole convinced that spiritualism was not quite the humbug some people would make believe. I am no Spiritualist, however, and never shall be.

My thoughts reverted to Gertrude. She was sick then—poor, darling girl! I knew now why she had not written, and I reproached myself bitterly for being the innocent cause of her sufferings. Alas! how often do we inflict pain upon those who love us!

I repaired to my room in a dreary Lime Street hotel, and wrote another long letter to the woman I adored, telling her all that the medium had told me, and asking if what he said about herself was correct. In no other way could I account

for her silence, and deeply and tenderly I unbosomed myself in words of sympathy, of anxiety, of love, of adoration, of sorrow, till language could no further express the intensity of my emotions. This gave me relief, and I walked with a lighter step than I had trod for a week before to the general post-office to deposit my own letter.

The Australian steamer was advertised to leave Plymouth in three days from this time, and I had already engaged a passage by her, so it would have been imprudent for me to linger longer in Liverpool. I left at six o'clock the next morning for London, where I met my English friend by appointment, and the same evening dined with him at the Athenæum Club.

It was the last week in May, and the height of the London season. The upper ten of England had gathered together in the world's metropolis to exhibit themselves to their friends, and dine and wine, and be dined and wined; and anxious mammas with marriageable daughters were actively on the look-out for elder sons, who, alas! were not always to be found, and when found, not to be led captive away; and anxious bachelors were equally eager in their search for heiresses, who were not always willing to exchange their money for matrimony; and people with small means, but, of course, great expectations, were struggling to appear as rich as the richest, and in order to do so the better, were more liberal in their promises to pay than their fulfilment of them warranted; and the spectacle of petty social ambition struggling in the vortex of fashionable life, to make itself heard and felt, was to be seen in all its miserable glory. But for me there was no time to linger, and I was in no mood for it if there had been.

I left London with my companion on the following morning by a Great-Western express-train for Plymouth, and during the journey he developed his vocal propensities by singing a song in which I caught the following words *a propos* of "the situation," as we say of military affairs:

" 'Tis a splendid race! a race against time,
And a thousand to one we win it.
Look at those flitting ghosts,
The white-armed finger-posts;

If we're moving the eighth of an inch, I say,
We're going a mile a minute!
The quivering carriages rock and reel,
Hurrah! for the rush of the grinding steel!
The thundering crank and the mighty wheel!"

"You're evidently not very sad about leaving London," I remarked.

"No," he replied, "I'm glad. I'm sick of London; sick of England; disgusted with finding nothing new in the Old World and nothing old in the New; tired of the sham of society, the pretence of piety, the affectation of superiority, the—heigh ho! 'a mad world, my masters!' Ah! London is a queer place—a gulf a man may soon lose himself in. I never liked it, but I was always fond of studying it inside and out, and it's a splendid school for the student of sociology, I can tell you."

I expressed a desire to see it when gay with the decorations of Christmas.

"Ah! that reminds me of the morning I left for America. The sky was gray and the air was frosty, and the scanty herb-
age in Hyde Park, as I passed, was covered with rime glittering in the faint sunshine. The city was odorous of prize beef and mutton, and fat geese; and the largest turkeys in the country lay dead on the poulterers' stalls. It was Christmas week, and the people of all conditions were busily preparing and providing for the great day of the year in England. The grocers' shops were showily decorated with fancy boxes of French plums, and confectionery, and Smyrna figs, and Malaga raisins, and sticks of Ceylon cinnamon, and heaps of candied lemon, and samples of Patras currants, suggestive of plum-pudding and mince-pies—the whole tastefully ornamented with evergreens; and the street-boys flattened their noses against the windows, and gazed in silent admiration and hungry longing upon the inviting show, only regretting that a pane of glass and the presence of the shopmen prevented them from helping themselves. The butchers' shops were hung with colossal sides of beef, heavy saddles of mutton, and ridiculously fat pork, into all of which sprigs of holly were stuck jauntily;

and those who had seen the fatted animals, of which these were the mortal remains, on the verge of apoplexy a few days previously at the cattle-show, the pigs blinded by their own excess of flesh, could now see them cold and ticketed in death, awaiting the inevitable fate of chops and sirloins.

“The churches and chapels were being decorated with evergreens by young ladies of their respective congregations, who were admirers of the clergymen officiating, and those of the latter who were too old or too ugly or too unattractive and uninteresting to have any young lady admirers were left to do the same work at their own expense. In either case it was being done, and on Christmas day the clocks would be wreathed with green leaves, and their whole interiors more or less festooned with clustering and glossy foliage—with holly, with mistletoe, and with laurel.

“It was the carnival of children, for toys and sweetmeats and picture-books and pocket-money and Christmas-boxes generally came to them in abundance, and the theatres were performing pantomimes for their special delectation. It was the carnival, too, of domestic servants, who were receiving presents, under the black-mail system, from the tradesmen all round, in consideration, of course, of overlooking any imperfections in the articles supplied, and saying that black was white whenever a question arose to the contrary.

“The faces of the rich and well-to-do looked bright and happy, and there was an air of cheerfulness pervading the streets. But in the holes and corners of the city, where lay the squalid homes of those steeped in penury and bent down with hunger and wretchedness, there was a dismal contrast. To many thousands of the London poor, Christmas had no charm, for they had no friends to make them presents, no money wherewith to buy the necessaries, much less the luxuries of life. From the homes of the wealthy to the homes of the destitute it was often only a step, but that step led into another world.”

CHAPTER XX.

MR. REGINALD WADE'S UNCLE.

"Do you know, Edmonds," said Reginald Wade to me on the morning after our arrival at Plymouth, "You remind me of my uncle, who dined with us at the Athenæum Club, and, last night, hang it if I didn't dream he was your father, and that there was the deuce to pay between you and him, and your mother and a host of other people. I had just got into the midst of the nicest family plot you can imagine, when I awoke. I thought I'd mention it—it was so very strange. I can only account for it by remembering that you impressed me when I saw you together as being very much alike."

"Indeed," I replied, affecting a want of interest, but feeling a good deal notwithstanding, "What wild children of an impossible realm dreams are! Now, however, that you speak of it, I think there is a general resemblance between us, but just as there's no accounting for tastes there's often no accounting for looks."

"He's a clever fellow," continued Mr. Wade. "What capital stories those were he told about his experiences among your countrymen. He visited America with his wife a long time ago, and he seems to know as much of the country as any Yankee."

I never forgot this conversation, although at the time I allowed it to drop without asking any questions.

I thought of Kate Wilkins' description of the gentleman—"William Edmonds"—who first introduced me to her in the road leading to her rural home, and tried to detect a resemblance between that and the uncle of Mr. Wade. But why? There were millions of thin, dark complexioned men of medium height, with penetrating eyes, in the world, who shaved and were about thirty when the memorable interview took place between Kate Wilkins and the mysterious William Edmonds. This man was apparently about fifty, but appearances are sometimes deceptive in matters of age as well as in others, and his name was not Edmonds.

I felt a momentary wish to cross-examine him in relation to his American experiences after what Mr. Wade had told me, but the chances were a hundred millions to one against his being anything more to me than any other casual acquaintance I had ever met, and there was too much improbability about any supposition to the contrary for the subject to engage my serious attention long. So I dismissed it accordingly, just as I would the recital of any other dream, for in dreams I had no faith.

CHAPTER XXI.

ONCE MORE ON THE DEEP.

With a heavy heart, I took up my pen in Plymouth to indite my last letter to Gertrude, before embarking for the golden shore. I was writing an epistle to which I could not hope to receive an answer for many months to come, even if all went well. Till I reached Melbourne I had now no prospect of hearing from New York, and meanwhile what changes might not occur! If I could only have felt sure that the prophecy of the medium was a true one respecting our meeting again, I should have been happy. But I was without faith enough for that; and, marvellous as the revelations of the man had seemed, I entertained a suspicion that with regard to future events he—like the report of a “contraband” in war time—might prove any thing but reliable. I therefore placed my trust in Providence, the great refuge of all, and embarked.

From our entrance into the Bay of Biscay till we left it far behind, we experienced a succession of heavy gales, and a tremendous sea, which rose like mountain-peaks around us, wild, terrible, and grand, sweeping our decks at intervals, tearing away a part of our bulwarks, and staving in our boats, confining the passengers to their cabins, prostrate, comfortless, and in some cases indifferent even to life itself. To add to the discomforts and perils of our situation, the ship was very deeply laden, and in bad trim. She was, moreover, slow to answer

her helm, and her engines frequently broke down, while she was leaking so fast that men had to be kept constantly at the pumps.

It was blowing a hurricane from the north-west, on our second night out, and the vessel lay in the trough of the tremendous sea, which was then running and rolling us almost dizzy. The main-topsail was carried away about midnight, and a number of casks of oil and water broke loose on the main deck, and were dashed to pieces.

It was on the third night that our foretopmast, maintop-gallant-mast, bowsprit, and jibboom were carried away, and the mainsail split, and then succeeded a wild flapping of rent canvas in the gale, a series of hoarse commands on deck, the shrill pipe of the boatswain's whistle, and the heigh-hi-ho of the crew as they commenced the work of clearing away the wreck, some of which becoming entangled with the screw, made our steam useless. The cry of "Man overboard!" was heard through the storm, about an hour after this, but nothing could be done for him, and he perished beneath the foam. It was not till sun-down, on the following day, that the wreck was cut clear of the screw and rudder, and meanwhile the ship lay like a log, pitched about by every wave, and rolling fearfully, with the sea often making a complete breach over her, and flooding the cabins and engine-room.

The hurricane, after a slight lull, increased to its former violence, and the mizzen-topsail and cross-jack were blown from the gaskets, while a sea that struck the starboard-bow carried away the starboard-rail, split the covering-board, and swept the decks. After this the reefed mainsail was blown away, leaving us with only the maintopmast stay-sail bent. Men and women began to despair of ever reaching the promised land; and the captain, who was a very religious man, and a Baptist, summoned all the passengers to prayer, in the main saloon, and actually terrified them more than the storm by exhorting them to prepare for death, and giving a graphic picture, drawn from his own imagination, of their future, if they neglected his warning. The weak and nervous listened and trembled, or if they had the necessary courage, retired to the privacy of their own cabins, to live or die in peace.

"Well, how did you pass the night?" was my morning inquiry of Mr. Reginald Wade—that was my companion's name.

"I passed it," he replied, "in the practice of the movement cure, but I don't feel any the better for it. I had a dream, too, which, in the language of Byron—ahem! was not all a dream. I imagined that all the movables in all the state-rooms had gone dancing mad; that bonnet-boxes were flying forward and back with heavy trunks, and that walking-canes were crossing over with meerschaum pipes; that ladies' work-boxes were promenading with gentlemen's writing-desks, and that carpet-bags went right and left with empty bottles—a change of partners and *chassee* occurring at frequent intervals, and all to the music of a tremendous storm, and the occasional crash of crockery."

It was not uncommon about this time to see a steward and a soup-tureen capsized together on their passage from the galley to the cabin; to see meats and vegetables performing eccentric gyrations between the dishes and the floor, generally alighting in some one's lap in the descent. Everything breakable had to be tightly secured, but, notwithstanding every ordinary precaution, the amount of property belonging to the steward's pantry that came to grief every day, without producing any visible effect upon the appearance of the breakfast and dinner-table, seemed to argue that the supply of breakfast, dinner and tea services at the command of that indispensable functionary was as inexhaustible as the stock of liquors in the magic bottle of a wizard.

When the weather calmed there was a general gathering of the passengers on deck, and it was refreshing to see how those who had been cooped in their cabins day after day enjoyed their first breath of fresh air under a clear sky. It was about this time that a general tendency towards flirtation was manifested by the single and the widowed among the passengers of both sexes, and billing and cooing—excuse the phrase—became their chosen pastime for the rest of the voyage. They paired off like birds in the Spring, and became severally subjects of gossip over the ship, for people had nothing to do but gossip, and the more the pity. They walked the decks together, sat together hour after hour, whenever the weather permitted,

played draughts together, sat together at the cabin-table, read to each other, and were considered to be "engaged" without doubt. The four hundred souls on board presented an epitome of the world, and, as on all long voyages, a fine opportunity was thus afforded for the study of character. People showed themselves in their true colors, and the result was not always to their advantage.

It was not until the evening of our twentieth day at sea that we entered the harbor of Porto Grande, in the island of St. Vincent, of the Cape de Verde group—our first coaling-station. The prospect was rocky, arid, and uninviting, and I did not regret our departure on the day following. But the skies were bright, the sun-sets glorious, and the temperature deliciously warm. With the thermometer at from eighty-five to ninety in the cabin, and the glow of the tropics around us, our hearts became as light as our clothing, and some entertained serious intentions of jumping over-board, and taking a good, long shark-like swim after the ship—a cool but perilous bath. Mr. Leander Jones was the first to propose the experiment, and Mr. Byron Smith offered to follow his example. Accordingly, those two gentlemen were one afternoon to be seen swimming alongside, in tow of the ship, but being apprehensive of bites from sharks and barracoutas, they did not repeat their excursion. And so the weary voyage sped.

CHAPTER XXII.

SCENES AND REFLECTIONS BY THE WAY.

Many were the days of dejection and nights of sadness I passed as the voyage wore on, and often I gave way to uncontrollable outbursts of grief. Again and again I reproached myself for having left New York. Why had I torn myself from the side of my guardian angel?

"Why, oh! why, my dear, devoted Gertrude, did I leave you?" I would soliloquize. "Why did I not stand my ground

and brave it out to the bitter end, instead of trying to better matters by flying to the ends of the earth, hoping to win fortune in a new sphere? Why did I not try to bring conviction to my guilty accuser—the mean and cowardly cashier in Mr. Morgan's bank—and so establish my own innocence?"

Alas! I bitterly regretted the separation, and these thoughts harrowed me deeply.

But, on the other hand, Hope told a flattering tale and reconciled me oftentimes to my lot, cruel as it seemed. I would achieve wealth in Australia, vindicate myself in New York, and yes—oh! yes—marry my beloved Gertrude, the idol of my existence, upon whom I had unwillingly inflicted so much wretchedness—the very thought of which made me shudder so much that Reginald Wade, when he broke in upon me sometimes in my state-room or on deck, would eye me with a suspicious look of surprise, and say:

"What's the matter, Edmonds, old fellow? What the mischief are you looking so glum about; thinking of the girl you left behind you, eh? Cheer up, my boy, there's nothing gained by grieving. Look at me; see how jolly I am! I bury my woes and fears like a philosopher. Let us laugh and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

As we crossed the line, children and ignoramuses were summoned on deck by individuals anxious to make something like "April fools" of them, who, pointing ahead, asked them if they saw it. Saw what? Saw the line—a long, black streak. Yes, they saw the horizon. Well, that was it. Their delusion was soon afterwards dissipated by an extension of their not very extensive geographical knowledge, and they laughed at the joke, and some at their own ignorance. At nightfall Neptune, in an indescribable costume of tar and feathers, cocked hat, red and yellow ochre, and iron hoop, the latter meant for a sword, came on board, attended by his satellites, who were all monsters of strange aspect and attire, and levied black mail upon the passengers, after which there were innumerable hornpipes on the forward deck, sandwiched with the songs, drinks, and other *morceaux*, congenial to the nautical palate, the whole conveying the idea that Neptune and Company were in the best possible spirits, and en-

joying their entertainment amazingly. At mid-night the aquatic visitors took their departure, and it is to be hoped sought seasonable refreshment in their submarine caves.

For two days after this we steamed slowly on, in the midst of a perfect calm—a sublime stillness. As far as the eye could reach, the glassy deep reposed, unagitated even by a ripple, while the fierce rays of a vertical sun shone down in lustrous splendor, making it glisten like molten gold. The feather-vane hung motionless upon its staff, the decks were burning to the feet, and the pitch oozed and boiled out of the seams; tar-drops fell from the almost cindered rigging, and the masts and booms gaped thirstily through huge cracks.

At sun-set the clouds, hitherto unseen, began to form in magnificent array, and assumed the richest dyes and most brilliant hues in the livery of heaven, which, reflected from their azure thrones, bathed the stagnant ocean in shadows of purple and gold, while all space became suffused with a pervading grandeur of coloring and of light. The eye wandered from zenith to horizon, watching the changing glory of the scene, and dazzled by the effulgence which flashed, and flashed again with a grand intensity of light, through crimson vistas of mountain-like clouds, permeating the entire sky, and diffusing the most delicate tints that ever beautified creation. With the setting of the sun, far above and around us, these gorgeous and fantastic forms—the colossal architecture of the heavens—rapidly crumbled into ruins. Bold and rugged promontories and outstretching capes now diversified the scenery of a picturesque coast, indented here and there with bays and creeks, and bordered with groups of islands, standing in the sea-like blue of the open sky. A few moments later and silvery lakes appeared, studded with wooded isles, overshadowed by the hills of the adjoining mainland, to the right of which could be seen broad, sloping savannahs and umbrageous woods. These airy landscapes wore the semblance of reality, and every hill and valley shone with wonderful distinctness. The whole spectacle was like a beautiful vision. Gradually, with faded lustre, the outlines of these landscapes and castles in the air became more and more indistinct; and a little later the shroud of darkness enveloped the scene, while one by one the stars

shone like heavenly beacons through the void, and it was night.

Sixteen days after leaving St. Vincent we sighted far away and dim in the distance the sterile and solitary island of Ascension. It seemed, as we drew nearer, to be a mass of volcanic rock, broken into peaks, as if undergoing decomposition and destitute of vegetation, except on one of the topmost summits, known as the Green Mountain, which rose two thousand eight hundred and seventy feet above the sea. The rugged and desolate aspect of the spot may be easily imagined when I say, that it consists of huge masses of rock, irregularly piled on one another, and set in a low frame of lava rock, broken by yawning fissures and ravines.

At length, and on our fifty-first day at sea, we sighted the bold and mountainous coast rising abruptly from the sea, between Table Bay and the Cape of Good Hope. Mountain steeps, composed of dark, reddish, gray sandstone, with ledges and beds of rock, barren of vegetation, excepting at their base, and crowned by rugged and craggy peaks, formed any thing but an inviting prospect; but it was a relief to the eye, wearied of the monotony of the ocean. As we neared the shore, I can well remember how the noon-day light shone gloriously down upon the crags and projections, whose brightness threw into dark shade the neighboring indentations; while below, a long line of foam marked the surf-worn shore. As we sailed abreast of the Lion's Head, to the right of Table Mountain, and bounding the bay on the south-west, a pleasant change came over the scene, and houses, gardens, and plantations were neither few nor far between. Advancing into the neck of the bay, the picturesque mountains of Hottentot's Holland, and Stellenbosch, became visible, far away in the background; while long ranges of sand-hills followed the coast to the northward.

Neat whitewashed villas smiled along the foot of the mountains, towards Green Point; and heavy batteries frowned upon the prospect. The extensive African city, with its flat-roofed houses, looked quaint and aboriginal; the church-spires stood out in bold relief; the two jetties, where barges and small vessels were loading and discharging their cargoes, stretched their

long arms seawards from the shore ; and a large commercial fleet rose like a forest from the bosom of the bay. In the immediate background, and between two huge mountain sugar-loaves, the Table Mountain towered thirty-five hundred and eighty feet above the level of the ocean.

Here, then, was the land of the Caffre, the Bosjesman, and the gorilla.

“Now, Edmonds, you’d better make up your mind to cut your journey short here. You’ll never have another such chance of making a fortune out of elephants’ tusks and lion skins,” said Mr. Wade, renewing an invitation to join him in a hunting tour, which I had thus far declined.

“Well, I’ll see,” was my reply ; by which the reader will perceive that I was not in a very decided frame of mind on the subject, and that more unlikely things might happen than my seeking sport and profit, and perhaps ultimate renown as a lion-hunter and gorilla-slayer—

“Away, away from the dwellings of men,
By the antelope’s haunt and the buffalo’s glen ;
By valleys remote, where the ourebi plays,
Where the gnoo, the sassaybe, and hartebeest graze,
And the eland and gemsbok unhunted recline,
By the skirts of gray forests o’erhung with wild vine ;
Where the elephant browses at peace in his wood,
And the river-horse gambols unscared in the flood,
And the mighty rhinoceros wallows at will
In the pool where the wild ass is drinking his fill ;
O’er the brown karroo, where the bleating cry
Of the springbok’s fawn sounds plaintively ;
Where the zebra wantonly tosses his mane,
As he scours with his troop o’er the desolate plain.”

I was impatient to reach Melbourne, in my anxiety to hear from Gertrude ; but I reflected that, in all probability, no letter would reach the golden land from her for months to come ; and as there was a line of steamers running between Australia and the Cape, and other opportunities of sailing frequently, I reluctantly yielded to the solicitations of my companion to join him in a short hunting expedition, and sold my

berth in the steamer at a premium, to an expectant gold-miner.

"I'm glad you've decided to remain," said Mr. Wade; "and you'll not regret it, I can tell you. I'll provide the weapons, foot the bills, as they say in your country, and make you a dead shot in three weeks."

One fine morning, less than a fortnight after this, we left Cape Town on a pair of rough, shaggy Cape horses. They were about fourteen hands high, ewe-necked and goose-hammed, and moved along at an ambling pace; but their legs were all right, and their eyes clear and bright. We took with us a pack of curs, and a bushman to take care of them, and act as guide. He was as decidedly ugly as mortal man could be, without being deformed, and only four feet high. His face, at first sight, appeared to be all mouth and cheek-bones, so large and thick were his lips, and so immense the bones as compared with the thin hollow cheeks. But upon examining him closely, I saw his nose. I could hardly call it a projection, it was so subordinate to his mouth; but this deficiency was indirectly made up for by the great width of his open nostrils. His eyeballs were so deeply sunk in their sockets, that, when I looked at his profile only, they were invisible. His forehead was low and shelving, his complexion two or three shades removed from black, and the expression of his countenance simply awful. His face was hairless, and his head covered with a number of tight woolly knots, separated by small patches of bare black skin.

We passed the first six nights at homesteads, and on the next morning struck straight into the bush. The curs were kept yelping all the time by the porcupines, the jackals, and long-tailed apes, that we saw; and these last fled before us by thousands, filling the air as they went with sounds of indignation and surprise. The jungle was almost impenetrable; but as we wore "crackers," we felt little of the thorns that would otherwise have pierced us. Suddenly our fifty curs were all brought to bay, at the same point, a sure sign of sport. Looking before us, we saw an opening in the bush, leading to a grassy patch of ground, where the dogs were all collected round the one tree. A glance upwards revealed the glossy

and spotted coat of a leopard, that, half in anger, half in fear, was peering over one of the boughs at the excited pack below. But no sooner had he caught sight of us, than he drew back his head, and, almost simultaneously, I cried to my companion, "Get closer to the tree, and fire!" "Keep out of his spring," said he; and raising his rifle, he aimed steadily and fired. The next moment the forest resounded with a terrific roar of pain, and the animal leapt forward for a spring. Just then a shot from my own barrel pierced his brain, and, with a heavy groan, he rolled dead at our feet. Our bushman did not take long to strip him of his skin; and the curs, true to their cowardly instinct, attacked and bit his carcass with fierce voracity.

At dusk, we prepared to camp out in the wilderness, by erecting the small tent that we carried with us.

The night was splendid. We had a sky of deep dark blue, with the moon shining luminously through it; and the stars, in lesser glory, all bright, clear, and distinct, and in their midst, that beautiful constellation, the Southern Cross. A sublime stillness reigned around. I saw, in the distance, the lofty mountains rearing heavenwards their rugged crowns, while below their sweeping sides were belted by the primeval forest. Our solitary fire lighted up with an unnatural radiance the dark foliage on one side of our camp, where we alone disturbed the solitude of the scene. Weariness overcame us, and we lay down to sleep—I in the tent, and my companion, enveloped in his skins, outside, in preference; while the bushman lay down with the dogs a hundred yards away.

But in the midst of all the novelty of my surroundings my thoughts reverted to Gertrude!—Gertrude the beautiful, the true—the darling of my poor broken heart, for broken I felt it to be, although the tenement of clay which held it still lived on and battled with the world as before, showing little or no sign of the ruin, the desolation and the anguish within.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A STARTLING EPISODE.

During the night I wandered in dreamland. Suddenly I seemed to awake with a start. Why, I was perplexed to discover; but while I was endeavoring to ascertain the cause, I received a blow on the head, through the side of the tent, as if struck by a heavy piece of wood, or an iron crowbar. For a moment I was apprehensive of an attack by natives, but the next instant a terrible idea flashed across my mind. A lion was sniffing at me! I shall never forget the sensations that came over me just then. The terrors of death assailed me, and I struggled against them; but only to find how weak and helpless I really was. You will say I was not lion-hearted. No. But it was the shock of surprise that paralyzed me. Had I been prepared in open day to meet a lion, it would have been sport. As it was, it seemed inevitable death. Seconds elapsed; they were like hours, and with them I collected my scattered senses, and summoned courage to my aid. Meanwhile I had remained perfectly still, and almost powerless. If, I began to calculate, I remained where I was without moving, there was a probability of the beast tearing up the tent, and dragging me through; while, on the other hand, an attempt to move away would, in all likelihood, be detected, and the lion, acting similarly to the cat under such circumstances, would spring upon and carry me off. I felt all the torments of the most dreadful suspense, and prayed to heaven for deliverance. While I was thus hesitating as to what course it would be best for me to pursue, the animal appeared to turn away; for after what was only a few moments, but which seemed a long time, during which I trembled with agitation, and suffered an agony of apprehension, there was a loud shriek, that immediately died away, and was followed by a deep, low growl; then a shot, and a still louder and more angry growl. Upon this, I almost instinctively felt about for my revolver, which I had, I then remembered, placed near my head before

going to sleep. With this I rose, and creeping round the tent, I saw the threatening beast standing perfectly motionless, with glaring eyes, uttering the same subdued but deep and ominous growl; and to my intense horror, holding in his mouth the body of a man, which he occasionally lowered to the ground, as if for the purpose of taking a firmer hold, but at no time letting it slip entirely from his jaws. I saw, by the direction of his look, that he had caught sight of me; and so terrible were the associations of a lion that rushed upon me at the moment, that I stood almost fascinated, and incapable of action. Singularly enough, although I remained stationary, he did not change his posture.

Suddenly, guided by the instinct of self-preservation, I raised my weapon and fired. I hit him, I think, just behind the shoulder, but he only gave a loud growl, without changing his position.

Again I fired, and with fatal effect; for the lion rolled over on his side, with a fearful, broken, and wail-like roar, but without relaxing his hold of the body, which was evidently that of my companion. I now approached the lion, and found his teeth sunk deep into the back and chest of his victim, and the jaws holding the dead body as tightly as in a vice. The bushman at this moment, like an imp in the darkness, darted towards me. He said that he had just awoke, but more likely he had been up a tree, where no lion could follow. The curs, which had commenced barking vigorously when the shots were fired, now cautiously approached the dead lion, and sniffed at the corpse as if they fully comprehended the misfortune that had befallen their late master.

The lion was evidently quite dead, but the united efforts of the bushman and myself were insufficient to remove the body from between his teeth. The features were distinctly recognizable; but they wore a horrid, ghastly expression, full of fear and dismay, and I turned sick and fainting from the sight.

Soon we renewed our exertions to drag the body from the lion's mouth, but in vain; and I saw that the only way for us to release it was by cutting, and we accordingly commenced the task; but only having bowie-knives to work with, we were unable to accomplish it; and, finally, I decided

to bury the lion and his victim in the one hole. Whereupon the bushman skinned the animal, whose flesh the hungry curs soon devoured, leaving only the skeleton, with the jaws still tightly locked on the dead body of my friend.

I was in the act of repeating as much of the burial-service as I could remember, over his grave, when the curs recommenced barking; and before I had time to profit by the warning, a lioness sprang towards me, and the next instant her head struck me full in the side, and sent me reeling like a body hit by the buffer of a locomotive running at half-speed.

At this crisis I started from a heavy sleep, trembling with fright, and, to my great joy, found myself still stretched on my blanket in the tent. I looked around through the gray light of the dawn for my companion, and I saw him. Then calling to him loudly, and clutching nervously at his body, I gasped out that I had just awoke from a terrible dream. I did this more to satisfy myself that I was in my waking senses than aught else, for so real had every thing appeared to my distempered imagination that minutes elapsed before I could fully distinguish between the things of the dream and those of fact, and as the impression was made upon me, so have I written. A painful sense of confusion oppressed me, and I could hardly believe the sound of my own voice. I had a dull headache and a leaden feeling about the heart.

“Was it you that gave that shriek?” asked my companion, raising his head with a startled look.

A dim recollection of having heard the sound of my own voice at the instant of awaking stole over me, and I asked; “Did I shout?”

“I should think you did,” and he sank back again to finish his sleep, but for me there was no such balm that morning.

I rose unrefreshed and with a vague dread of impending evil, for I believed in coming events casting their shadows before.

How I wished myself back in New York, with Gertrude—the lovely and devoted heroine of my life’s romance—restored to me, I can well remember, and I devoutly prayed to the Al-

mighty for her and for my own safe return to her side, as—while tears welled up to my eyes—I had often prayed before, with a heart full of bitter regrets, and an eager yearning to vindicate myself before her father, and even yet claim her as my bride—dark, desolate, and almost hopeless though the prospect seemed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I AM LIONIZED.

Wade and I rode together that day with the bushman, and met some Caffres, armed with shields and assagais, who told us they had seen a lion, and we were not long in finding his spoor, which we followed up three or four miles, the Caffres accompanying us, when the animal broke cover. Our first view of him was on an open plain, partially environed by a thorn thicket, from which he had just emerged. For a few moments, after running forward, he halted, and raising his massive face, eyed us with a fiery glance, simultaneously with which a troop of jackals beat a hasty retreat from the same thicket across the plain to the left. Then, having apparently decided that prudence was the better part of valor, he turned round and cantered off to the right, with his tail projecting and bent.

Wade, calling upon me and the Caffres to follow, put spurs to his horse and started in hot pursuit, gaining upon the lion so fast that the latter suddenly came to a full stop by squatting on his haunches with his back towards us, a proceeding which placed Wade in great danger of galloping over him. Then springing to his feet, he turned about face and began to wag his tail rather ominously I thought, accompanying the movement with a deep, loud growl, which put me in mind of the tones of an organ heard during the swinging of the censer. Towards myself in particular he cast a very inquisitive glance, and I had a suspicion that he was about selecting me as the most vulnerable point of attack, and that if he

really did so he would have in all probability an easy victory, so far as I was concerned. In order the better to fortify myself, therefore, and in preference to trusting to the speed of my horse in the event of a charge, I cautiously dismounted near a tree, rifle in hand, and stood there ready to climb it whenever danger threatened. This strictly defensive measure was attended with some little trepidation but complete success, all but the climbing, and the time for that had not yet come, as the lion, instead of charging me, was obliging enough to stretch his arms and lie down, meanwhile observing me with the interest of a naturalist watching the movements of something he wanted to catch. At a signal from Wade, who was dismounted on the other side of the lion and considerably nearer than myself, I and the bushman drew our rifles from their holsters and put the caps on. At this, the reputed monarch of the forest manifested symptoms of uneasiness and sat up like a poodle seen through a magnifying lens. Having examined me again with a critical eye, as a painter might do a model, he cast a look behind, no doubt guided by a wise foresight which suggested the propriety of keeping open a line of retreat in case of a reverse—an example which I considered equal to three years' instruction in military tactics at West Point. The next instant, finding the field clear, he made a short run towards us, uttering long, deep, angry growls. Wade, leading his horse, crossed over to our side at this juncture, and then, with a view of getting a broadside shot, we led the horses forward as if we intended to pass him, but the feint did not succeed, as the lion, with admirable sagacity, moved as we moved, so as to present his full front all the time.

And now the critical moment and the lion approached together. He was within fifty yards and still advancing, when we turned the horses' heads away, and Wade, throwing his rifle to his shoulder, fired. There was a sharp crack, a puff of smoke, and a chorus of yells from the Caffres as the lion charged, and down I went like a man struck by a sledge-hammer, and one of the horses with me. Here was something like a verification of my dream with a vengeance. That dream was a prophecy.

To be knocked over by a lion, and then escape to tell the

talé, is an event which occurs to very few, and one not likely to happen to a man twice in his life. Therefore I look back upon the incident with a feeling of pride, not unmixed, however, with a thrill of terror; for not being an individual with an especial reverence for the ordinary and common-place in life, I take singular delight in doing any thing that may be considered extraordinary and that nobody else has done.

When I found myself reeling under the tremendous shock inflicted by the lion, and recorded for the benefit of myself and posterity, I felt strange. "Strange if you didn't," the reader may say. Just so; very strange, indeed. I felt that kind of terror which a mouse may be supposed to feel on finding itself suddenly turned over by the paw of an unfriendly disposed cat—the normal feeling of cats, without exception, for mice in general.

If Gerard, Gordon Cumming, or Baldwin had found themselves in a similar predicament, they would, of course, have loaded and fired while in the act of staggering, and thereby brought the enemy to the ground at the same moment that they regained their own equilibrium. But I was no such expert, and I had to trust to luck.

I fell face downward and then rolled over among the horse's legs, not knowing in my bewilderment whether I had been swallowed whole by the lion, as the whale swallowed Jonah, or where on earth I was.

Oh! for just forty seconds' start, and a swift pair of heels would have carried me to the nearest tree, and no monkey in the world would have ascended it quicker. But there I lay. I was of course on my way down the throat of the hungry beast. Here was a perilous situation. Chop—I thought I heard the lion taking his first bite. Crunch—I imagined my right arm had gone to pieces.

This was while I was rolling over; the next instant, the horse that had fallen with me rose and galloped off, and I recovered myself, and finding that I was so far out of the lion's jaws that I could see a tree, I made for it as fast as I could, yet the speed seemed to me unaccountably slow. But how can a man run when cowering under a lion's eye? All his strength goes in trembling. At least such was my case.

I succeeded, however, in reaching and climbing the tree, rifle in hand, and, when I regained breath and courage enough to look down, I saw the lion lying dead at the feet of my companion.

"You may come down," cried Wade; "I have settled his hash;" and I descended like a very courageous man indeed, but feeling very weak about the knees.

The Caffres, who had taken to flight, according to their usual custom, when the lion charged, were visible in the distance, and two of the horses had disappeared, but the third, my own gray, was limping within sight, while our bushman was squatted under a tree, evidently in great pain. On going up to him, I found that he had been knocked down at the same moment as myself, and severely bitten through the shoulder, the lion's teeth having penetrated the shoulder-blade; but the horse had suffered terrible laceration, the teeth and claws of the beast having laid the ribs bare and torn huge pieces off the flank, besides disabling the left fore-leg.

"How did you manage to succeed so well?" I said to Wade. "That was a narrow escape."

"Yes, the narrowest we'll ever have. But I'm fortunately pretty sure of my own shooting; so as soon as I saw the lion spring on the gray, I stood away from the horses and waited for the first clear shot, and then, after slaking his revenge, as he trotted past me, I put my rifle to my shoulder, and gave him the second barrel, when, turning on his back and throwing out his neck and paws, he dropped his lower jaw, and with blood running from his mouth, he died."

I soon found that I had not come off wholly unharmed, for my hands and right arm were torn and discolored, whether by the horse's hoofs or the lion's paws I could not tell to a certainty, but appearances favored the supposition that both had a share in it. The stock of my rifle, too, was very much scratched, and I was full of pains and aches.

Having skinned the lion and caught the horses, we moved towards our camping-ground, leaving the carcass to be devoured by the vultures that were sweeping around it. We succeeded in leading the poor gray as far as a stream of water, where we bathed his wounds; but he had become so weak

through loss of blood, added to fright, that he could walk no further, and we were compelled to leave him there. On going in search of him the next day, we found nothing of him but his skeleton. The probability is that the lions had got hold of him during the night; but he may have died of his first wounds, and been devoured by jackals and vultures—the inevitable attendants upon the dead in the African wilderness.

CHAPTER XXV.

INTROSPECTIVE.

Here in the primeval forest, night and morning, I offered up a prayer for my beloved Gertrude, and reproached myself for the misery I had caused her. My heart was always in New York, although the wilds of Africa were around me, and I longed for fresh movement and new excitements to drown my impatience and regrets. I yearned to be at her side again, never more to part. But would that happy period ever arrive? The thought thrilled me as Hope and Despair alternately quickened my pulsations.

The dangers of the forest were as naught to me in comparison with the risk of losing irretrievably the one bright jewel that had crowned my existence. What was all the world to me if Gertrude was not mine, and the opportunity to redeem the past in the future never presented itself? I shuddered at the bare possibility of our never meeting again, and often I reproached myself for having accepted Reginald Wade's offer to join him in the hunting expedition. "What's the use of uttering regrets?" he would say. "Make the best of the present and the future. Life is too short for us to grieve long over the past. You seem to me like a man who was terribly in earnest over some love-affair. Is that so?"

"Alas! it is," I replied, "but the details are too sacred for utterance, and I don't wish to give way to unmanly mourning."

"Cheer up, old fellow. Cheer up! All's well that ends

well. A happy dispositioned young fellow like you, with good health and all the world before him, ought never to suffer from 'the blues.'"

"Well, I don't often," I would say, trying to shake off my appearance of gloom, "it's only when I sit down and brood that I feel so. Generally I'm very sanguine and cheerful. Don't you think so?"

"Oh yes, jolly as a sand boy, but, like the sailor's parrot, you're a terrible thinker sometimes. Now, I've perhaps as much to think about and make me sad as you have, but you never find me looking as if I'd lost my last friend. Let me suggest as an antidote an indulgence in the devil-may-care sentiment of 'I care for nobody, nobody cares for me.' It's bad to think too much of any one thing. Divert your mind and drive dull care away. Trust to Providence and keep your powder dry."

The days and weeks dragged wearily in the Bush, notwithstanding the excitement of the hunt, but I could not return to Cape Town without Mr. Wade, unless I undertook the journey alone, and I did not wish to be the cause of interfering with his sport. Moreover, I am free to confess that I participated in it with wonderful zest, and, on the principle of "in for a penny in for a pound," I determined to see it out, and, meanwhile, controlled my impatience to reach the Land of Promise.

Gertrude, however—my own adored darling Gertrude—would rise before my mind's eye night after night as I gazed into the embers of our camp fire, and I fondly pictured her in a thousand different ways, and in imagination heard her voice and my own again in conversation—shared once more her joys and sorrows—felt the soft touch of her dainty hand, and revelled in unspeakable bliss. I read and re-read the sad, sad lines she had given me on my departure from New York, and kissed a thousand times the daguerreotype portrait of herself which I always carried next my heart. That picture was the idol I worshipped, and its lineaments I never tired of tracing, wherever through the wide world I wandered.

Where was Gertrude? Was she living or dead, and what had happened since I left her? With what feelings did she regard me now? These were some of the many questions I

put to myself, but alas! there was no one to answer them, and so I lived on in suspense, carrying with as light a heart as I could the burden of my great grief, and communing with my own soul.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CARRYING THE WAR INTO AFRICA.

Grateful for my own escape, I, nevertheless, subsequently returned thanks to the lions with bullets. "And this is how it came to pass. "Now or never, something or nothing," said I. "Although I'm a nervous man, and very much alarmed when knocked over by a lion, I may be tolerably brave when, rifle in hand, I spot my game at a respectful distance. Therefore, I'll go in for a hunter's life in earnest, and become a second Gerard or any one else you please in that line, and seek the bubble reputation at the lion's mouth. And how easy it will be to add a touch of fiction to heighten the effect of my thrilling adventures when I publish them. My fortune will be made at once. When I go to London I shall be dubbed F.R.G.S., and invited to read a paper before the Society, describing all that I saw and did, and the lions of London society will gather around me like those of the land of my exploits, and when I return to my beloved New York, the Geographical Society there will do likewise, and I shall find myself famous." Here was calculating conceit. I was sporting for fame and fortune as much as the genuine love of sport. But what matter? A charlatan is as good as a prince, so long as he eats olives with his fingers. While determining to outdo the celebrated Munchausen in the marvellousness of my adventures, (or at least the chronicle of them, which passes for the same thing,) I had yet regard for time, and I resolved to remain no longer in Africa than was necessary to accomplish my murderous purpose, for I was eager to reach Melbourne, and I had a due regard for the shortness of life, and a desire to cram as much into its little span as human effort would permit.

For four months after this I remained with my companion, a prowler in the wilderness, and, in order to give my readers some idea of what befell me during this eventful period, I cannot do better than give a few brief extracts from my diary, which was generally written in blood or a decoction of coffee, tea, or black earth, with the sharpened end of a piece of reed, for I lost my pencil shortly after commencing it, and I was unprovided with pens and ink.

The reader will at once perceive that these specimen incidents of every-day life in Africa are recorded with that becoming modesty and utter freedom from exaggeration so eminently characteristic of African hunters and explorers.

THE DIARY.

August 21st.—On going out this morning I saw a bull-buffalo feeding; crawled through the grass towards him, and, when I came near enough for a shot, fired and wounded him, upon which the infuriated beast immediately charged. I took to my heels with surprising agility, but before I had run twenty yards I found myself caught up by the bull's horns as if by a "cow-catcher," and tossed high into the air, but fortunately alighting in the branches of a tree, I clung there to the intense disgust of the buffalo, which manifested a strong inclination to repeat the experiment, and remained on guard below for that purpose till the next morning, when he obligingly died from the effects of his wound, and I descended from my perch, feeling rather the worse for my unaccustomed roost, and very much like a bird with his feathers ruffled.

Gertrude is ever present in my thoughts by day—in my dreams by night. What a fool I was to leave her. Alas! alas!

25th.—I had a terrible adventure with a bull-elephant yesterday. Chased him and fired, when he turned and stood at bay, and then charged trumpeting, with his ears up and spread out like a pair of Chinese fans. Put spurs to my horse, but found my way so impeded by tangled bushes, that before I could get clear the monster was within a few yards of me, when he made a terrific sweep with his trunk, which actually grazed the horse's tail as he flew forward, and came so near my head that the rush of air created knocked my cap off. The elephant

kept close at my heels for about a mile, and then reaching an open country I left him considerably behind, upon which he gave up the pursuit and turned. Pulling up by a circular run, I followed his example, and was soon near enough to give him a shot, which made him turn again, and charge with a blast of his trumpet at his best pace; but he had no chance of overtaking me, so he resumed his retreat, and I went after him, firing as before. It was not till he had charged five times, twice coming within an ace of me, that I fired the last shot which brought him to the ground. Then I went up to him and found tears trickling from his eyes, and, darting at me a very reproachful glance, he expired.

28th.—I was suddenly disturbed in the night-time, by the bushman Jack, who told me, in the greatest state of alarm, that one of the horses had been attacked by lions. Instantly I seized my double rifle, and went out; saw, through the moonlight, six lions growling over the carcass, not twenty yards off; fired into the midst of them, but as they took no notice, fired again, when they retired slowly, roaring fiercely. Followed them up, firing at intervals. Found myself almost surrounded by a pack of tigers and wolves, which were making the air wildly melodious with their howling cries; took the precaution of climbing the nearest tree, where I remained till day-break, when the lions, having completed their meal, beat a retreat. Descended the tree, and found two of the lions dead on the field.

September 10th.—Since my last entry I have shot sixteen elephants, twelve lions, four lionesses, three rhinoceroses, seven hippopotami, eighteen springboks, besides two hundred head of smaller game. What would the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals say to such doings? In the midst of all, however, I have spells of bitter sadness. I find consolation in looking at Gertrude's portrait, and pleasure in the anticipation of meeting her again—meeting her never to part, I hope, but alas! I am so very far away from her now that the mere thought of the distance that separates us fills me with despondency.

12th.—Had nothing to eat to-day, but a piece of a broiled snake that I shot, after it had flung itself at me with a fearful

hiss. The Massoras—one fifth clothed in greasy tattered skins, and the rest naked—cooked it, all but the head, which they threw away, by cutting it into pieces and boiling. This, with a drink of water out of a skin-quagga, carried by the natives, could hardly be called luxurious fare.

13th.—Shot an elephant, and dined off him in the form of broiled steaks. Loaded the dogs with meat, by cutting off huge lumps of flesh, and making holes in them, so as to slip their heads through. In this way they can carry enough food to last them for days. They presented a very comical appearance, with these novel necklaces on.

15th.—Wade and I were overtaken by a bush-fire, driven before a strong wind. We were nearly blinded by smoke, and soon found tongues of red flame licking the ground about us; while the crash of falling trees, and the roar of the conflagration, filled the air. We succeeded, by hard running, in getting a short distance ahead of it, when we halted, and set fire to the grass and brushwood in several places; and then lay down, while the on-coming flames curled around us, within a few yards, and then passed away. I thought I had entirely escaped injury, till my companion, on rising, burst into a peal of laughter on seeing that I had only one whisker left, the fire having carried the other away.

16th.—Cut off the odd whisker for the sake of uniformity.

23rd.—I went out duck-shooting, and fell in with an alligator in the middle of a stream. He pursued me very rapidly, creating, meanwhile, great commotion in the water; and I had hardly regained the bank, when I felt a terrible tug at my shooting-jacket, which fortunately parted company, and disappointed the alligator of a choice meal. I sprang out of the water the next instant, and, looking round, saw the mouth of the monster open to receive me.

Dreamed last night that I had been swallowed by an alligator, and that my spirit forthwith passed into a gorilla. Awoke in a fright, and told Wade, who laughed at me, and went to sleep again.

26th.—Came suddenly upon a large bull elephant, standing in a meditative attitude in a copse. Fired, and lamed him in

the shoulder ; upon which he limped away, with a glance in his eyes, that seemed to say : “ Only to think that I should have come to this.” Felt sorry for him, but couldn’t help firing again. Hit him on the forehead, when he put the end of his trunk to the wounded spot, sorrowfully, as a child would do its finger. Hit him near the same place with another bullet, when he began to rub his forehead gently with the point of his trunk, as if suffering from a headache. Sympathised with him in his sufferings, but fired again notwithstanding ; when, with his eyes fixed upon me reproachfully, his frame quivered convulsively, and, falling on his side, he was no more.

October 2d.—Wade and I, finding ourselves nearly out of bullets, set to work melting a couple of candlesticks, an old saucepan, a poker and a cork-screw, to supply our pressing needs in this respect.

4th.—Miss the poker and the saucepan sadly. Was surprised by a buffalo, which charged furiously, and only escaped by dodging him adroitly, and catching hold of his tail. This stratagem on my part completely disconcerted him, and he whirled round like a top, till we both staggered with dizziness. Then he set off at a tearing pace across the country, like a dog with a kettle tied to his tail, and at last succeeded in working himself into a terrible fright. I let go as he leapt over a water-course, and the next moment found myself floundering at the bottom of a creek, with an alligator swimming towards me at full speed.

6th.—Spent the day wading and shooting in the Maputa river ; was charged by several hippopotami, one of which in particular caught me by the shirt-collar, and pulled me under water. As she held on tight with her teeth, I slipped my shirt off, and swam for life ; and regaining the bank, laughed defiance in her face. Hereupon she displayed her chagrin by munching and swallowing the garment I had left with her, at the same time looking at me maliciously, as much as to say : “ This is how I’d like to serve you, my boy.” Aggravated by this menace, I fired two shots, and killed her ; upon which the Caffres pulled her ladyship up high and dry upon the beach, and then rushed at the carcass with knives, assegais, and other instruments, and cut her to pieces with half-frantic energy,

tossing lumps of the flesh to their fellows in the background like a shower of paving-stones. Secured the tongue for myself, and had a part of it cooked for dinner, and the rest pickled.

10th.—Sighted a troop of elephants, covering the summit of a large hill. They tossed their trunks—the equivalent of turning up their noses—on seeing me, and retreated, raising a tremendous dust as they went. I followed through the cloud, and, when they slackened their pace to that majestic walk which makes the elephant the most dignified of animals, I singled out the largest, and firing, invited him to charge, which he did with promptitude, and an agility I had hardly calculated upon; for before I could get out of the way, he was down upon me, and both horse and rider were caught up by his trunk, and flung in the air. Fortunately, however, my good steed alighted on his legs, and took to his heels with prudent alacrity; and I came down, cross-legged, on the tail-end of the elephant's back, and with my rifle still in hand. I had only to fire under his ear to bring him to his knees, and see him roll over just as I dismounted. In this position, he began to throw up dust with the point of his trunk, savagely. Reloading, and peppering him till he died, I secured the finest pair of tusks that I had yet included among my trophies.

12th.—Daily and hourly I think of Gertrude—the pure angelic being who has suffered so much for me, and for whom I would undergo, if that were possible, a thousand deaths—and brood over my sad lot, while I almost curse the author of my misery.

The base wretch Perkins—Mr. Morgan's cashier—who so falsely and maliciously accused me of what my nature would have never either tempted or permitted me to commit, deserves a keener punishment than any I am ever likely to inflict, but if I had wreaked summary vengeance upon him when he uttered his guilty accusation, conscience would have acquitted me of the crime.

How hard it is to bear up under such an injury as this without feeling at intervals a terrible desire for revenge, only those know who have experienced the ordeal. Sometimes impulse makes me say I will yet return to New York, and either force him to confess the cruel wrong he has done me, or be myself

the instrument of retribution. What a blow he struck at *her* in filching from me my good name! Surely such a man sooner or later must feel the bitterness of remorse. If there is a spark of goodness in his nature, he will some day repent and do his best to atone for what he has done, but alas! it may be too late to be of any service to me. I am liable to be killed any day in these African wilds, and may never have the chance to face my accuser. I believe, however, after all, "there is a Divinity which shapes our ends rough hew them as we may." I have a blind confidence in the future notwithstanding its uncertainties and the dangers that surround me. I believe that sooner or later a merciful Providence interposes on behalf of the side of truth and right, and that this will be demonstrated in my own case. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit.*

(Diary from this date, to the end of November, omitted. Extracts continued without dates.)

I have no idea of the date or what day of the week it is. We are now in the gorilla country, and Wade is just recovering from the effects of a squeeze from a gorilla that caught him by the hair, as we were passing through a dark wood, and pulled him up into a tree, where he would doubtless have killed him, only for a shot from me, which brought the two to the ground together. But the shot was not fatal, and the forest immediately resounded with the gorilla's dreadful roar, tearing through the air for miles like thunder; and, raising himself on his short hind-legs, he began to beat his breast furiously with his huge paws, and advanced a few steps towards me. Wade, having succeeded in scrambling off, was groaning in the back-ground. The thundering roar and the drum like beat of the breast continued, and the gorilla waddled a few steps nearer, foaming with rage, and swinging his muscular arms. In appearance he was something between a man and a bear, with a large stomach and a round head, the latter attached to a huge, awkward body, six feet high, by no perceptible neck. He had a low forehead, with a tuft of short hair on it, deep-set gray eyes, a dark moustache and side-whiskers, thin, sharply-cut lips, and features wrinkled and drawn up, so as to reveal a for-

midable set of long-pointed teeth. His round head, his short hair, his flashing eyes, and the villainous expression of his countenance, added to the motion of the arms, made him a capital caricature of a prize-fighter; and, laying my rifle against a tree, I assumed the attitude pugilistic, and mocked his movements. This evidently exasperated him more, and, when stepping briskly forward, I gave him a full right-handed blow on the nose, and then stepped back, just in time to avoid a skillfully-directed return blow, which would have been fatal, with his left, there were no bounds to his fury. He stamped, and tore, and ran at me, and, opening his powerful jaws, showed his teeth grimly, and resumed his sparring action with renewed energy. I gave him one more blow, this time over the left eye, which sent him reeling backward, and then seizing my rifle, I awaited his oncoming. He was within two feet of me, and preparing to strike, when I fired steadily into his right eye, and, with a heavy groan, he fell dead at my feet. And so I saved my life.

We have been hunting gorillas for several days past, and yesterday shot a female, and captured her young one alive. The latter cried like child, mocked me in impatient rage, and refused to be comforted. On my return to the village, I was surprised to see one of the women take it into her arms, and suckle it, and to witness the almost maternal affection with which she appeared to regard it.

Have been living on elephant and gorilla meat for a week, with the addition of palm-wine. Mebennee, the king of the Mebondemo tribe, has furnished me with sixteen wives, all of whom I have respectfully declined, the result of which is, that I am considered to be any thing but a ladies' man, and the ladies, I am told, are determined to be revenged upon me.

There was a full-dress ball here last night, or rather an undress ball. The ladies and gentlemen wore nothing but oil-skin, that is to say, they had their skin oiled.

I had a narrow escape from a gorilla yesterday. He appeared suddenly before me, twitching the skin of his forehead,

beating his drum-like breast, and rolling thunder from his chest, after the manner of gorillas in general; and before I had time to fire, but just as I was on the point of taking aim, he seized the rifle by the barrel, and wrested it from me in a moment; and, throwing it to his own shoulder, fired straight at my head, thus displaying a power of imitation which was really wonderful. Fortunately the bullet passed through the side of my hat, just grazing my skull, and the gorilla, not understanding there was a second barrel, overlooked it, and pursued me a few paces, but I outran him. Here he stopped, and began to examine the weapon, and, placing the muzzle to his breast, he tried the experiment of pulling both triggers, and, to his great grief and surprise, succeeded in lodging the contents of the loaded barrel in his stomach, whereupon he twisted the barrel like a piece of wire, and broke the stock like a biscuit in his anger, after which he uttered a diabolical roar, and seeing me grinning at him through an opening in the wood, waddled towards me at full speed, but staggered and expired on the way.

Having spent more than four months in the wilds of Africa, I told Wade that I must leave him, for there was probably a letter awaiting me at Melbourne, and I prized the possession of that letter more than all the elephants' tusks and lions' skins on the continent. A letter from Gertrude! How the mere thought thrilled me! I had read it in imagination so often and in so many ways, that I longed to receive it with an impatience which I shall not attempt to describe.

"Well, if you must go," he replied, "I don't know but what I'll accompany you. At any rate, I want to get back to the Cape. I'm getting a little tired of being squeezed by gorillas, scratched by lions, tossed by buffaloes, bitten by snakes, and crushed by elephants: I want a change of diet, too, one wearies of snake, and monkey, and hippopotamus, and elephant, and gorilla, eternally at breakfast, dinner and supper, and longs for nectar and ambrosia; I can imagine a man relishing a glass of red ink and a fish-hook after such fare as we've had."

So we commenced our journey back to Cape Town together,

hunting by the way, and securing new trophies every day. Of these we had ten bullock wagon-loads—with a dozen bushmen in charge—when we arrived, tanned and ragged, at our destination; besides several tons that we had forwarded before travelling to the gorilla country.

These we sold in parcels to merchants of the place, and the result was, that after the payment of all expenses, Wade's share of the spoils amounted to twelve hundred pounds, and mine to a little over one thousand.

In that glittering gold I thought I saw my way to Fortune—back to New York and Gertrude Morgan—to vindication—to happiness!

CHAPTER XXVII.

MR. REGINALD WADE WRITES HOME.

"Do you know, old fellow," said Reginald Wade to me one forenoon, as I found him in front of his portfolio at our hotel in Cape Town, "I've just been writing home, and drawing your pen and ink portrait at full length. A description of my lion hunting adventures in South Africa would certainly not be complete without that—eh?"

"Perhaps not," I replied, "but as your correspondents don't know me, there is not, of course, the same interest attaching to your mention of me that there otherwise would be."

"Oh! you don't know that," he rejoined, "I mean to have you meet them some day, otherwise they won't believe half that I've told them about my terrible privations, hair-breadth escapes and wonderful achievements. Come to England with me and I'll introduce you all round. Won't you?"

"Well, perhaps I will, but you know man proposes and God disposes, so there is little use in my saying what I'll do or what I won't do at present. I should like very well to do as you suggest—that you can have no doubt of, and as they say in France *nous verrons*. But Australia and America first."

“And by the bye,” interrupted Wade, “I’ve been telling my Uncle Henry—the same who dined with us at the Athenæum—of that curious dream of mine about you and him. That will make him feel all the more interested in you—eh? Little incidents of that kind go a long way sometimes in making one remembered. At any rate it will amuse him. He has no children, unfortunately, although there is a chance of his succeeding to a peerage some day—that is to say, his father is heir to an Earldom, and he comes next. I’d like to introduce you to his wife, a charming creature, the only child of a splendid fellow—a baronet with more pounds than I have pence. But he—my uncle, I mean—is not good enough for her. He was always a little too fast, although he’s the son of a colonial bishop. It’s proverbial, however, that the sons of bishops are, to quote Byron, ‘ungodly in their glee.’ Come, you are a man of the world. What do you say?”

“If,” I said, reflectively, “I understand it aright, this gentleman is your uncle on the maternal side?”

“Yes—my mother’s brother.”

“What’s his wife’s first name, do you say?”

“Harriet—why?”

“Oh! nothing.”

“I’ll put you forward as the great African lion and gorilla hunter, when we get back,” remarked my companion, “and all the drawing-rooms in London will be open to you, and you’ll be a veritable lion—for a season. But a lion never lasts longer than a season, so guard against disappointment.”

“Well, and what of yourself? You’ll be the great Mogul.”

“Oh, you know, it doesn’t matter much what becomes of me. I’m not particularly devoted to my native land, but there is one woman in it that I really and truly love. Unfortunately my family oppose the match because her father is nothing more than a country curate, and she is entirely without fortune. But I think I shall marry her after all, for she’s certainly the only girl I ever loved, and I can never love another in the same way. She lives near my father’s estate in Derbyshire, and we have known each other almost from infancy. Weighed against her all the money in the world seems like mere dross. Yes, Florence Graham—pure, beautiful and ingenuous—outshines to

my mind all the belles of society and queens of fashion I have ever met in the gay world. There is a struggle between interest and sentiment in my case, and I think the heart will win. You shall see her," he continued half jokingly, "when we return if you'll promise not to fall in love with her."

"There's no danger of that," I observed with a smile. "I owe allegiance to another I'm glad to say, and all the treasures, fascinations, and beauty in the world would not avail one iota to divert me for an instant from my fixed purpose."

"Fine fellow! fine fellow!" exclaimed Reginald Wade, rising and patting me on the shoulder in a jocular way, "what a model young man you are! Give me the young lady's address, and I'll write and tell her what a faithful lover she has. But, joking aside, Edmonds, you must come back to England with me. I'll promise you plenty of sport and no end of good cheer."

"What is England to me?" I asked, thinking of Gertrude, "I must first go to New York."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

The success of our hunting expedition failed, upon reflection, to reconcile me to the course I had pursued in interrupting my journey. I reproached myself bitterly for having lingered on the way, and awaited with anxiety the arrival of the steamer which was to bear me on to the golden land where, in all probability, had been lying for months those letters of which I had so long thought and dreamed. It seemed almost an inconsistency for me to have done as I had; and this very appearance preyed upon me, and I grew restless, sleepless, and despondent. How could I atone for such apparent neglect? The thought had often oppressed me in the wild solitudes from which I had come, and destroyed the pleasure of the hunt. But I consoled myself with the fixed determination to resume my journey, come what might, within six months from

the time of landing, *Deo Volente*. And I struggled hard indeed to stifle the feelings which were ever springing from the fountain of the heart, and not unseldom bedewing the eye with tears. I had a dreadful past to look back upon, all the more crushing because filled with contrasts. The brightest, gladdest, most sacred memories, were overcast by the dark clouds of calamity; and although a woman's love shone through them, the guiding star of my life, true and steadfast through every change, there was a terrible sense of wrong and humiliation suffered, which, day by day, inflicted its slow-consuming torture.

The loss of reputation, the disgrace of crime, were of themselves a dreadful punishment; but how much more acutely painful when aggravated by injustice. For innocence to bear the mark of guilt is sad indeed; and it were better that ninety-nine should go unpunished, than that one of the righteous should suffer.

Time, however, might rectify the wrong which a fellow-man had dealt me; and even that glowing, happy picture of the future, of the realization of which I was once so confident, and which had kindled within me so much hope and joy, and made life itself a heavenly pilgrimage, might yet be realized. Ah! how much I yearned that it would. As the night is darkest when the dawn is nearest, so the black sky that overshadowed me might some day brighten before the advancing beams of Light, and Truth and Justice absolve me from the imputations under which I had suffered.

The love of a woman before marriage has linked her fortunes with the object of her affection, must be deep and earnest indeed to pass unchanged through such an ordeal as fell to the lot of Gertrude. Few are the loves among the upper-ten of society that could survive the social disgrace of a crime such as that with which my maligner charged me. And might not even she change? Time, absence, and the opinion of others, the last the most dangerous of all in its influence upon the female mind, be it for good or evil, might make her resigned to give me up. But I could hardly believe it. A choking sensation overcame me at the mere thought. Nevertheless, she might possibly doubt my motive in leaving New York so soon

after the accusation, and a question as to my sincerity in denying the charge against me might arise in her mind. Perhaps it would have been better for me to have remained and demanded a trial. But then that would have involved a public disclosure of the case, and been very unpleasant for her; and I loved her too much not to sacrifice my own interests for her pleasure.

The idea of returning to New York as soon as possible, after reaching Melbourne, occurred to me. Then I might demand a hearing by suing Mr. Perkins for slander; but if he persisted in his false accusation, how could I rebut the false testimony? I thought of the quotation,

“ Man’s inhumanity to man
Makes countless millions mourn ;”

and pitied the human being who could be so cowardly and debased as to ruin the reputation of another for the sake of sustaining his own. No! I had but one hope: in the course of time Mr. Perkins might make a confession; and, meanwhile, I relied on Gertrude believing my statement, and not his, to be the true one.

“ You look very sad,” said Mr. Wade, one day; “ what’s the matter with you ?”

“ Well, to tell you the truth,” I replied, “ I feel a little home-sick.”

“ Ah! that puts me in mind of ‘ the girl I left behind.’ I’m a sad dog myself, and I often find sentiment and memory too much for me. I’m travelling now, as you know, as much to get over an affection of the heart as any thing else, because my father threatened to cut me off with a shilling if I married that certain young lady. But, as I’ve said before, I don’t think I shall be able to get over it, so I may have to take the shilling—that is, if the young lady will take me. One reason why I’m so much down on society is its folly in sacrificing comfort, independence, and affection, for appearances. I’m glad to say I’m not one of its slaves, and I pride myself on the fact.”

“ ‘ Come,’ said Doctor Johnson,” he remarked, changing the conversation, and quoting from memory, “ let us take a walk up Fleet Street ;” and we sauntered out together.

The stranger, ignorant of the fact that the Cape was origi-

nally settled by the Dutch, would have no difficulty in discovering, by personal observation, what he failed to learn from history. The Dutch element is conspicuous on all sides. It is to be seen in the stoops, porches, gables, and weather-vanes of many of the houses, and the faces of the drowsy smokers of long clay pipes, who, in the evening, sit on the stoops, and puff lazily, exchanging, perhaps, now and again, a word with a neighbor on the opposite side of the street. It is to be seen in the names of some of the streets, and many of the badly painted shop-signs; in the visage and gait of half the men and women; in their dress, and in a few of their schools, where the Dutch language is taught grammatically; it is to be found in their proverbs, their habits, their tastes; and the descendants of the boers of 1650 look as if their descendants would continue Dutch till the end of time.

Men, with lean forms, dusky skins, high cheek-bones, sharp chins, languid eyes, and indolent step, were known as Caffres; and flat-nosed, dwarfish, miserable looking creatures, as Hottentots; but the genuine Caffre and Hottentot have long disappeared from the precincts of Cape Town.

The various shades of color among the people, varying from the deep ebony of the negro to the delicate tint of some of those of mixed blood, gave a picturesque appearance to the masses. Here and there I saw a woman of the latter class, of surprising beauty, and paused to gaze upon the graceful outline of her well-developed form, the eloquent fire of her full bright eyes, and the winning expression of her faultless features. But these instances of beauty were few and far between.

It was a relief to the eye to meet a Malay, with a bright-colored handkerchief twisted round his head, and to find a sprinkling of peaked bamboo hats circulating in the tide of traffic.

I was strolling leisurely along a walk which led by a brookside in the rear of the town, and admiring the natural beauty of the spot, at the same time that I was observing the not unpicturesque attitudes of a number of ebony washerwomen congregated on its banks, when a figure approached, and a once familiar voice said: "Why, how do you do? What brings you here?" The speaker extended his hand, and I at once

recognized an old acquaintance. It was Captain Whittlestick!!!

I started in amazement, for I had not seen him since the day I left Newfoundland. "Hillo! Captain," I exclaimed, "is that you? Is it possible that you really remember me?"

"Yes," said he, "I knew you by the cut of your jib."

"What, after all these years—leaving me a boy and meeting me a bearded man?"

"Yes, Sir-ee. I never forget a man, nor a boy either, I guess—no matter whether he wears a sou'-wester or store clothes."

With the exception of several old scars on his face, and a sprinkling of gray in his hair, his appearance had undergone little change since the day he left Liverpool in the ill-fated "Skimmer of the Seas!"

"Where are you bound to?" he inquired. "Tell us all about what you've been doing?"

"I've paid my passage by the steamer 'Harbinger' for Melbourne," I replied.

"Je-rusalem! is that so? Just where I'm going. I guess I shall leave to-night. My ship is the 'Orinoco.' Come and see a fellow when you arrive. I came in here jury-rigged, but I've made repairs, and am ready to sail."

While we were talking over old scenes and old friends, he said to me, pointing towards the Table Mountain:

"Do you see yonder white cloud? That is what we sailors call the Table-cloth. Whenever you see that gathering over the mountain, you may make up your mind for a storm;" and within an hour, the wind suddenly changed from north-west to south-east, and blew half a gale; the sky darkened, the rain fell, and the waters of the bay leapt gayly against the background of the sky with a feathering of foam.

"If you want to ascend to the top of the mountain," said he, "you can do it in two or three hours, and enjoy the most magnificent prospect at the Cape; but take care of the monkeys."

I walked with him as far as the pier, when he bade me good-bye, with a firm grip of the hand, and then jumped into a boat which carried him to his ship through the gathering storm.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MELBOURNE AT LAST.

“Well, are you coming?” I said to Mr. Wade, about the time the steamer was expected to arrive.

“Yes, I don’t think I can do better. One good turn, as the saying goes, deserves another; and as you accepted my invitation to stop here, I shall be happy to return the compliment and go there.”

And so we sailed from Cape Town together, on board the “Harbinger,” late in February, 1853.

Seventeen days on the ocean, and lo! the beautiful island of Mauritius! its lofty and irregular mountains overlooking its fertile valleys and fields of sugar-cane. Like an emerald set in gold, it flashes upon the view, tempting the seaworn voyager to its shores. We round its western end, and enter the broad bay of Port Louis, at the head of which lies the town, pleasantly environed east, and north, and south, by the mountains, one of which, immediately in its rear, rises to an altitude of nearly three thousand feet. A long ridge—“the camel’s back”—shoots from it, crowned by a formidable fortress called the citadel, commanding the harbor, and other mountains loom away in the distance.

Cupolas and minarets rise to the left, and to the right is a gaudy village of wooden cottages and walled gardens. The one is the camp of coolies, the other that of creoles. The passengers feel eager for the shore, and exchange remarks upon the beauty of the prospect.

We land. We find the quay no idle scene. Coolies, in groups, are singing as they work, loading and discharging the lighters that lie alongside the wharf. Custom-house officers are busy weighing, gauging, and measuring; and men of all countries, some of whom are in their national costumes, move about among bales and boxes and mats of sugar. The graceful turban, and the flowing robe, contrast with the sober garb of the North, and the pig-tail of the Chinaman with the close crop of the British officer. We stroll into the Place d’Armes

—a square planted with trees, and resembling its namesake of Montreal—and are told that the building at the upper end of it is the Government House. We learn from a guide-book that the population is about fifty-five thousand, including eleven thousand Indians.

The streets cross each other at right-angles, and some of them, as in South American cities, are traversed by water-courses; while, as in the United States, numerous trees, bamboo and other, offer a grateful shade. We overhear a babel of tongues as we pass along, and note a variety of features and complexions. The buildings are as heterogeneous as the people. Imposing stone warehouses stand side by side with the wooden hut of a Malabar tobacconist, whose shop resembles one of his segar-boxes; and handsome stone residences, shaded with verandahs, and surrounded by well-kept gardens, in the immediate vicinity of detached shanties. Yet all this is picturesque, although often grotesque. We are glad of the shelter which our umbrellas afford from the bright, hot sunshine; and occasionally we enter one of the Liliputian shops, to find the proprietor, an Indian, perhaps, squatted on a table or counter, with his goods within reach on all sides. He does not change his posture when we enter, nor when he serves us, and seems to act under the impression that if he moved from his position he would melt away.

French is the prevailing language, but English is alone allowed to be spoken in the legislative chambers.

We saunter into the Malabar quarter, and find nearly every shop a manufactory, and numbers of traders dispensing with shops altogether. Barbers are doing a brisk trade, under pieces of matting propped with sticks against a wall; and my companion stops to be shaved by an Asiatic.

Retracing our steps, we get glimpses of the bread-fruit tree, and the lofty tamarind, with its crest of bright, green foliage, growing beside the date, the cocoa-nut, and the bamboo, in the inclosures of private mansions. Flowers meet us at every turn—for the people love them, and bring them from all ends of the earth to adorn the city of gardens.

Our eyes become accustomed to sign-boards, and we are no longer surprised to see a lollypop shop called a temple of

sweetmeats, or a dealer in small wares dignify his establishment by calling it a bazaar of fashion. We are tempted by indolent guides to ascend the Ponce, from whose summit a magnificent view presents itself; but we decline, lest the expedition should cost us our passage—for our time of departure is uncertain, and this is the hurricane season, when it only requires a signal to be hoisted over the post-office to put most of the vessels in the harbor to flight, and cause the remainder to take down their topgallant masts and yards, and throw out half-a-dozen anchors to prevent their being swept on shore, and to make the inhabitants of the town put up their hurricane shutters—they have such things—and fortify their doors by extra bolts, bars, and boarding; for the wind having once effected an entrance, usually blows away the roof, and makes short work of the premises. Meanwhile the leaves fly like chaff from the tree branches, branches are torn from the parent stem, and even whole trees are uprooted; the bay is lashed to fury, and the vessels at anchor bend over like yachts in a regatta.

We are again at sea; a passenger dies of a slow wasting disease, in the vain hope of recovering from which he had undertaken the voyage. We gather on deck, and listen to the impressive reading of the burial-service over the corpse which, in its canvas coffin, rests on the bulwark, balanced by the hand of the sail-maker. The next moment it drops over the ship's side, and we follow it with our eyes till it diminishes to a mere speck, and then vanishes for evermore. A burial at sea is a solemn event, and we ponder over the mystery of life and death, and those watery depths in which so many have found their grave. For a time the sound of laughter is hushed, and women may be seen gazing with tearful eyes into the dark blue waste where so many hopes lie buried.

A run of three weeks brings us to King George's Sound, on the southwestern coast of Australia—a fine bay, surrounded by hills, east, north, and west, and included in the colony of Western Australia, which is but thinly settled. The sand-hills look desolate, and the signs of civilization are scanty. We coal—and what a delightful thing coaling is, only those can appreciate who have been on board a steamer during coaling-time, when the noise and dust combine to deafen and to choke; and after

this, we receive on board a few more passengers, and again resume our tedious voyage towards Adelaide, where we part with some of our old companions, and receive on board a few rough but arrogant personages, with heavy beards, cabbage-tree hats, knee-boots, and riding-whips, calling themselves "old chums," who talk a good deal about sheep and tallow, hides and horse-flesh, interspersed with allusions to the diggings and large nuggets, and wonderful stories of their adventures with bush-rangers and natives.

Three days more, and lo ! land again.

A pilot boards us at Shortlands Bluff, whose appearance on deck is the signal for all sorts of questions, and the vessel glides through the "Heads" into the broad waters of Hobson's Bay, whose shores at first low, rocky, sandy, and patched with furzy vegetation, gradually change their aspect ; and lofty mountains, the distant snow-capped summits of which were before alone visible, display their sweeping sides covered with inviting verdure against the clear back-ground of the sky. Onward we steam past desolate sand-hills on the left, and dark primeval woods on the right, in the immediate foreground, and sixty miles from the entrance, reach the anchorage ground, where we embark on tug-boats for the shore. We course the river, Yarra Yarra, lined with tea-tree scrub, and which, prior to the year 1835, was unknown to all save the wild man, and are landed at the Melbourne wharf.

The prospect is anything but promising, for it is near the end of April, and the commencement of the wet season. Mud is deep and universal, and neither porters, omnibuses, nor carriages are to be seen, so we have to follow the example of elephants, and carry our own trunks, in the midst of a drenching rain—that is, such of us as have them. But fortunately, Mr. Wade and myself are wise in our generation, and travel with the most portable quantity of baggage of perhaps any single gentlemen in the world, and, in this case, we have left that little behind.

We see nothing but sheds and shanties, separated from us by an acre of quagmire ; and, trudging onward, come to an ugly square stone building, access to which is gained by a ladder-like flight of steps, and which we are informed is the

custom-house. We take our way up a street flanked on the right by a low wall, inclosing the ugly custom-house, and on the left by a dirty-lookin' public-house, and a few wretched looking wooden edifices, used as stores by individuals whose appearance is even more forbidding than their warehouses. Several times we stick in the mud while making our way through this street, which presents about as unrefreshing and miserable an aspect as any to be found either in or out of Australia. However, this is Melbourne. This is the El Dorado.

There are few people to be seen moving, and the only sign of commerce is a solitary bullock-team, waiting in front of one of the before-mentioned wooden stores. At the top of this street a more promising scene meets our view. The cathedral stands at one corner, and the market, forming a square, and by-the-by, the only one in the city, at the other, while Collins Street, the Broadway of Melbourne, divides them. The Bank of New-South Wales fronts the religious edifice, and several brick and plaster hotels, and a few modern shanties, and an iron house, face the market-place; the latter consisting of a confused assemblage of tents, Jews, slop-goods, and fruit-stalls.

Such was the capital of Victoria at that day.

With feelings of pain, anxiety, hope and dread, I hurried through the muddy streets towards the post-office, joyfully anticipating the result of my application for a letter at one moment, and fearing it the next. I was so excited by the time I arrived at the delivery-window, marked A to F, that I forgot for a moment my own name, and stared at the clerk in the office with a bewildered look, thinking only of Gertrude.

"What name?" he asked gruffly, and it suddenly recurred to me:

"Washington Edmonds."

He pulled a handful of letters out of a pigeon-box, marked E, and threw me three, bearing the New-York post-mark, and addressed in the handwriting of my inamorata. How I prized and kissed them, and grew flushed in the face with joy, and hurried to a retired corner to open them, away from the intrusive gaze of others! How I reproached myself for having

stopped at the Cape on my way out, and made sudden resolutions to atone in the future for the shortcomings of the past! How the future brightened before my view, and a flood of sunlight burst upon my enchanted soul! How I blessed the adored writer of those precious letters, and kissed them with passionate fervor again and again, for her sake, I remember as vividly as if it had been yesterday.

CHAPTER XXX.

GLAD TIDINGS.

Impatient to break the seals, yet anxious to prolong the pleasure of anticipation, and half-afraid to face the shock of any painful tidings the letters might contain, seconds passed over me like hours, as I gazed fondly upon their superscriptions, and read the dates stamped in circles on their covers. Those post-marks sent a chill to my heart, and I felt angry with myself. One had been in Melbourne three months, another nearly as long, and the third two.

I opened the last first. It ran thus :

“ *New York, November 28, 1852.*

“My dear Washington: Oh! if you were only here now, I'd give the world. Mr. Perkins has confessed all. In my last I told you that he had been arrested for embezzling father's money. Soon after that, he was tried, convicted, and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in the State Prison. While he was in the Tombs, just after his conviction, I went to him with father's lawyer, and entreated him to tell the truth about the accusation he made against you; but although he appeared oppressed with remorse, and on the verge of a confession, he made none. I left, telling him I hoped his conscience would soon lead him to perform the only act of justice by which he could atone for the injury he had done you. I saw that his pride struggled against making the confession, but his manner betrayed him, and I read his thoughts as plainly as if he had uttered them aloud. He looked very sick and haggard

then, and evidently felt keenly the disgrace of his position. He told me he was more sorry for what had occurred, on account of his wife and family, than for his own sake, and added that he should not live long, for grief was killing him fast.

“On the next day, I think, he was removed to Sing-Sing; and one evening, about a fortnight after, father received a message from the prison, saying that Mr. Perkins was dying, and was anxious to see either him or myself. I persuaded him to go, and to allow me to accompany him; and on the next morning we started. As we entered the room of the hospital-ward, where he lay, on a low iron-bedstead, he raised his eyes towards us, and uttered, in a low, tremulous tone, ‘I’m glad you’ve come;’ and drew from the head of his bed a folded sheet of paper, and handed it to father, who read it before giving it to me. My hand trembled as I took it from him, and I read it all in an instant. I only send you a copy of it, but you shall have the original as soon as you come home.

“It ran as follows, and was written in a feeble, unsteady hand:—

“‘I have only a short time longer to live, and I write a confession. I cannot resign myself to die without doing it. It was a wholly false charge I made against Mr. Washington Edmonds, and I repent of having ruined him. I did it to throw suspicion and guilt off myself, and fix it upon him. I believe him to have been quite honest. May he and all forgive me, and God have mercy upon my soul.

EDWARD PERKINS.’”

“Oh! how glad and thankful I was. I went to the bedside, and said: ‘Thank you for this, Mr. Perkins. You have done a good action, and we all forgive you.’

“‘Duty, duty,’ he murmured, faintly. ‘I sinned. I’m dying now. My heart’s broken. Forgive me; pray for me.’ Here he became inarticulate, and I slowly shrank back to my father’s side, gazing at the pallid face and closed eyes of the sick man. He was evidently very weak, and even the slight effort at speech he had made, exhausted him.

“Father stepped forward, and said: ‘I’m sorry to find you so ill, Mr. Perkins, and I’ll use all my influence to procure your pardon.’ A sigh, a groan, and a tear escaped from the

unhappy prisoner, but not a word. There was a dull, mute agony, in that silence of the tongue.

“‘He’s too sick to be spoken to,’ said the turnkey, who accompanied us, as a hint that we should leave; and we immediately quitted the room, with a ‘Good-by, Mr. Perkins,’ to which there was a faint rattling echo of ‘Good-by,’ from the low iron bedstead. I burst into tears when I found myself outside the prison, I was so sorry for you. The thought that you had suffered and lost so much, and banished yourself almost to another world, because of the false accusation of the man who had now confessed how much he had wronged you, pained me deeply; and I knew that months must elapse before you could hear the news, and months more before you could return to New York. Ah! my dear, dear Washington, you little know how much I have loved you, and grieved about you, since that terrible morning when you went away. It is now more than six months since you left, and oh! how long that time seems. I am so sorry you ever went away. Why did you? Ah! if you only knew how sad I’ve been.

“I’m growing more and more anxious about you, every day, for not a letter has come from you since you left England. I have all sorts of imaginings, and am very, very unhappy. I’m not the same person that I was before you left, and I’m afraid you’ll hardly know me when you return, and you must return immediately. I have father’s special instructions to call you back; and so that you may have no excuse on pecuniary grounds, he bids me tell you that he will lodge a thousand dollars to your credit with Adams’s Express Company, payable at Melbourne. He is very sorry for what he did, and seems quite broken-hearted. He says he owes you a debt he can never repay. He has written you a letter, which I inclose. Won’t you come? I implore you to. Don’t let any feelings of false delicacy prevent you. Only remember me, and think how miserable I am without you.

“I hope you have, or will receive my two former letters, addressed to you in the same way as this, and that you have written me good long letters in reply.

“I am only just recovering from the excitement of my visit to Sing Sing yesterday, so you see I lose no time in letting

you know the good news. Every night I place your daguerreotype under my pillow, and every morning before rising I take it up and look at it, and kiss it over and over again. Do you do the same with mine? Write soon, and tell.

“Your very loving and anxious GERTIE.”

A happy sense of relief, followed by an exultant feeling of joy, took possession of me, and I tore open the inclosure addressed in the well-known handwriting of Mr. Morgan, and read:

“New York, November 28th, 1852.

“My dear Sir,—I avail myself of the first opportunity to inform you, that Mr. Perkins, my late cashier, who was recently convicted of embezzlement, has confessed that the charge he preferred against you, and which at the time I had sufficient confidence in him to believe, was false. I need hardly assure you that it gives me much pain to know that you have been so deeply wronged, and that I am willing to do all in my power to atone in the future for the injury done you. Should you feel disposed to return to New York, you may rely on my assistance; and lest the want of money should be an obstacle in your way, I enclose a draft for a thousand dollars in your favor, on the Melbourne branch of the Adams Express Company. With sincere regret for the past, and the warmest assurances of my continued friendship, believe me

“Yours very truly, EDWARD MORGAN

Opening the remaining letters, I found them full of grief, anxious speculation, and details of what had occurred since I left New York. The silence which I had been unable to account for at Liverpool, on any other supposition than the sickness which the spiritual “medium” had described to me, was explained. It was all true. Gertrude had been prostrated by a nervous fever from that very day when last we parted, and had lain on the verge of death for many weary days, weak, heart-broken, and despairing; and in her hours of delirium she had raved of me, and called to me by name. Alas! that I should have been the innocent cause of so much grief, so much melancholy anguish, to one that I loved more dearly even than life itself. And how strange that a human being in

Liverpool, knowing nothing personally of the parties or circumstances, should have told me so truly of thoughts and events that were passing in New York.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE LAND OF GOLD.

I felt my eyes lighted up with a preternatural radiance, and my face aglow with excitement, as I hurried from the precincts of the post-office into the open streets and walked, I hardly knew where, so bewildered and intoxicated was I with my new-found joy. People turned to look at me as I passed them rapidly by, heeding nothing but my own thoughts, and fairly transported by the glad tidings I had received; I was reading the letters over again from memory, and I seemed to remember every word they contained, so vivid and indelible was the impression they had instantaneously produced.

I was rewarded at last, and virtue was triumphant! The great prize on which I had placed my highest hopes and grandest aspirations was now almost within my grasp! I was happy!

But one thing caused me regret, and that was my not having arrived at Melbourne sooner, to receive and reply to those dear letters. To what would Gertrude attribute my long silence? I would write by the next mail, and immediately I rushed back to the post-office to inquire when that would be despatched. A notice on a board told me that a ship to sail on the next day for New York would carry a mail-bag.

I went from house to house, and hotel to hotel, seeking a room or a place where I could sit down and write, but could find none. People laughed at the idea, and hinted that there was not a lodging to be let in the whole city, and that I might think myself lucky to have sleeping-room on the floor of a billiard-room, or an umbrella to camp out under. But I was not to be baffled in my purpose, and I at length succeeded in finding a house where, in a room full of stretchers, I was allowed

the use of a wash-stand and a trunk, the former as table and the latter as chair, on which to indite my fond epistle. And there I wrote page after page, sheet after sheet, regardless of interruption, till dusk. Then I remembered that I had failed to keep an appointment with Mr. Wade, and that I had eaten nothing since early morning.

My letter was still unfinished—that is, I had not said all that I had to say; but, determined not to miss the morrow's mail, I brought it to a premature conclusion, and repaired with it myself, through a drenching rain, and mud ankle-deep, to the post-office. After that I took a long breath of relief, and went off to the Prince of Wales Hotel in search of Mr. Wade, whom I had promised to meet three hours before.

"A pretty fellow you are to keep an appointment," said he, when I found him, cue in hand, in the billiard-room.

"Where we are to sleep to-night, I don't know," said he, when the game was finished. "There are no beds to be got here, and I'm told there's not sleeping-room to be let in all Melbourne. Here's Doctor Sharpe (the surgeon of the steamer) in the same boat with us. But for waiting for you, we'd have gone back to the ship."

"I found important letters waiting for me, and I thought it better to reply by a ship that sails to-morrow than to take passage by her myself."

"Yourself!" ejaculated both, with a laugh of surprise. "That would be a good joke," said Mr. Wade, "for a man to come out to Australia one day, and leave it the next—the quickest travelling on record I should think."

"Well, the fact is, I'm wanted at home. An unexpected event has occurred, and—I'm the happiest man alive."

"So you appear to be," said he, with a smile, as he witnessed my exultation; "your wet clothes evidently don't dampen your spirits a bit. What's the matter?—any body dead? If you run away from me now, after bringing me all the way from the Cape, I shall consider it base desertion."

I felt a desire to be alone in my great joy, and thought only of the now glowing future.

"Where can we get beds, do you think?" I asked the landlord of the hotel.

"That's more than I can tell you," said he. "I've been asked that five hundred times before to-day; but there is a house in Flinders-street, where they may possibly do something for you;" and he directed us how to find it. "If you can't get a bed there, or anywhere else," he continued, "you may have the hay-loft over the stable here to-night."

We thanked him for his proffered horse-pitality, and at about eight o'clock emerged from the hotel into the black and silent streets.

No lamps, no pavement, no shining moon, no illuminated shops were there to cheer us on the way. All was mud and darkness.

Over slippery streets, abounding in gulleys and lagoons, on this dismal April night, did we wend our way, laughing at our mishaps and defying garotters, for it was then a common occurrence for strollers by night to be "stuck up;" not in the ordinary sense of stuck-up people, be it observed, but by being brought to a dead halt at the revolver's mouth, or with a blow of a heavy life-annihilator, commonly known as a "life-preserver," or at the point of a bowie-knife. It was either "your money or your life," or both, and woe unto the unarmed. We were not afraid, however, of such assassination; we had each either a knife, or a sword-stick, or a revolver, and very courageous indeed we professed to be, and very mirthful under the colonial ordeal we were. We arrived at the house, one of two standing alone, after sliding, stumbling, and sticking in the mud as we advanced to the door. Truly, Melbourne at that time was as much a ditch in winter as it was represented to be a dust-bin in summer.

We knocked, and in answer to our inquiries were informed that we could have beds there for the night. We considered ourselves lucky. It was one of the old houses of the colony, and characterized chiefly by the numerous panes of broken glass, patched with brown paper and pieces of newspaper, which abounded in its windows, and by the general dinginess of its color and its broken exterior; for both were of brick, covered over with plaster, and colored in imitation of stone; and as large pieces of the plaster had crumbled and fallen away, their entire aspect was damp and wretched. Immediately

on entering the house we were shown into the front parlor, or general sitting-room, where fourteen individuals of the gender masculine, and order "new chum," were assembled.

The landlord, a dapper Englishman, of dark complexion and affable manners, invited us to make ourselves comfortable; in conformity with which invitation we prepared to do so, although we found it what is commonly called tight work. With the exception of one digger, and three German Jew-traders, who kept up a continual and exclusive guttural chatter amongst themselves, the party was composed solely of new chums, so we were soon in conversation, each one enquiring what ship his neighbor came out by, and how many days they were on the voyage, and so on.

Leaving twelve of the fourteen individuals behind us, we followed our guide up-stairs, to a room on the first floor. On entering it we were somewhat flabbergasted to behold its entire surface covered with wooden stretchers, thirteen in number; ten were occupied, and the feet of the sleepers were depending from the ends of several of them. The remaining three were at our own disposal. Beyond these thirteen stretchers, the room was totally unfurnished. There was a tallow candle burning on the mantel-piece, its feeble blaze being now and then obscured by the smoke emitted from a short black pipe, in which the occupant of the stretcher immediately under it had sought consolation. There were two Germans in the opposite corner, holding a very rapid and somewhat loud conversation, and whose attention was not for a moment diverted by our entrance; the others were either cogitating, snoring or quietly asleep.

We proceeded to undress, depositing our boots and hats at the feet of our respective stretchers on the floor. These were only furnished with a single blanket each, and that of a thinner texture and smaller dimensions than any I had ever before seen; there were no pillows, no mattresses. Looking up at the ceiling, I perceived that our corner was saturated with rain, and that the floor bore evidence of having been very recently soaked in consequence; but, as several holes presented themselves in the floor, the water had evidently been carried off into the regions below, almost as quickly as it had splashed down.

There was an interstice made, I observed, in the arrangement of the stretcher-beds, so as to allow room for the uninterrupted downfall of the drops. I had, unfortunately, taken possession of one of the stretchers on either side of this shower-bath. There is nothing bad that might not be worse, thought I, on the same principle that there is nothing so good but that it might be better. For instance, the stretcher might have been directly under this water-filter, and that would have been worse.

It is a delightful thing going to bed sometimes, and it is but seldom that we shrink from it—small boys excepted—but on this occasion I positively did shrink from going to bed, for these naked-legged canvas-covered wooden stretchers were so dirty, and every thing, even the very atmosphere in the room, was so damp and cold, and the mosquitoes were buzzing about so numerous and maliciously, that the prospect of rest or sleep was by no means promising.

Having made a pillow of a small leather bag that I carried with me, and covered myself as well as I was able with my coat, taking good care to keep the blanket as an outsider, I prepared to sleep. The black pipe was still emitting smoke, the Germans were still in busy conversation, and the mosquitoes in active drone went feebly on the wing from sleeper to sleeper. Luckily the number as well as the individual strength of the latter had been much reduced owing to the cold season of the year, otherwise we should have been visited by an infliction even more painful than it was our lot that night to suffer under.

The wind whistled, the rain beat, and the darkness without was unrelieved by a star, a moonbeam, or a street-lamp. Dimly flickered the candle in its socket. The Germans ceased talking, and very soon were asleep. Then there was silence. And thus hurried by the night, which brought morning to the thirteen occupants of that dingy room.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MY GUIDING STAR.

I awoke amid a clatter of voices proceeding from the various stretchers. Every body appeared to have just awoke, and to be equally inclined to rise; for a collection of feet almost simultaneously reached the floor, among the number of which my own were not missing. My first object was to glance at the weather, and the condition of the streets. A splash from the leak in the ceiling on the saturated boards of the room-floor, told me that it was either raining, or had been so but recently. The calmness of the swamp in front of the house denoted a cessation of the watery downfall. But the puddles and the mud promised a day of difficult travel, although the newly-risen sun was decking the hills with the rainbow light of morning, most prominent among which, and immediately fronting the house, was Emerald Hill, on which the canvas tents of "Canvas Town" were gleaming in the sunlight. Between the house and the hill the Yarra Yarra river wound its way; following its course to the right, and in the direction of the bay, a long forest of masts was presented to the eye, extending from the breakwater opposite the custom-house, while beyond and in the distance, seated on the broad waters of the bay, a fleet of tall shipping proclaimed the commerce of the clime.

It was a very unfortunate thing that every body got up at the same time, as, owing to the circumstance of there being but one wash-bowl in the house, the accommodation for lavatory operations was quite inadequate to the occasion. This one wash-bowl was placed on a stand, immediately outside of the room, and at the head of the stair-case, and near it was a much-worn tooth-brush, swinging by a cord from a nail in the wall, and evidently intended for universal use. "*Pro bono publico*," said Mr. Wade, jocularly, and pointing it out to me. I recoiled from the sight, and made my way with all possible expedition down-stairs. Here I paid my five shillings, and having been joined by my companions, the door was unbolted, and

we emerged into the open street, simultaneously with which, the mud of the previous day still on our boots, was brought in contact with the still more plentiful mud of to-day. We proceeded together along the street, as far as the church, in a line with Prince's Bridge, a large stone arch across the river. We took our way over this bridge for the joint purpose of refreshing ourselves by the walk, and making an inspection of Canvas Town. Even on the low western bank of the river, tents were here and there to be seen.

Ascending Emerald Hill, and passing an inclosed series of wooden buildings on our left, erected for the use, at a small rental, of houseless immigrants, we approached the precincts of the town. The view was not pleasing; there was a look of wretchedness and disorder, of much ruin and hardship about it, which rather gave rise to melancholy reflections than buoyed up our hearts to face the first rough brunt of colonial life. The tents were of all shapes and sizes, and, on the whole, their condition was sorry looking. The ground was wet, and puddles were abundant; everything in and around was damp from the recent rains, and the golden hues of the morning, just flashing athwart the landscape, blazed out in striking contrast to the woe-begone scene upon which we gazed. The sun was fast rising; rich, vivid, and inspiring lights were crowning the elevations, and very soon the aspect of things would become more comfortable, beneath the warm and vivifying influence of the shining morning. It was even now, while we stood, undergoing a perceptible change for the better, and our hopes grew brighter as the sun-light spread more and more across the prospect, lighting up the shipping in the bay, and silvering the wave, lending life and animation to the sylvan vista far to the eastward, where here and there a white and stately villa gleamed out from amidst the inviting foliage, which lined the rolling banks of the over-flowing river, and lighting up in beauty of many shades the city to the northward—the city just awaking to the life and activity of the day, in which each and all would renew the battle for gold!

As we stood, Canvas Town gradually revealed its inner life to our watchful gaze; and one by one the occupants of the various tents emerged from their resting places into the outer

world. The appearance of these individuals was about as forlorn to the eye as their fleecy domiciles had been. Quickly, however, they bestirred themselves, and lighted their several fires; but some had great difficulty in accomplishing this, owing to the dampness of the materials employed. Curling lengths of smoke now became general throughout the camp, and several women and children made their appearance among the crowd of men. Every individual member of that transient community seemed alive to, as well as to appreciate, the force of being in a land where time was pre-eminently money; and, acting under its influence, men endeavored to make the best and most ready use of it, and acted with a promptitude, decision, and earnest, anxious industry, unknown in any but a gold-finding country; but which the necessities of time and place goaded them to practise. It was no idle work, the game of life in Melbourne.

Before the mail closed in the afternoon, I wrote another letter to Gertrude, inclosing one for her father in reply to his, in which I expressed my own joy at having lived to see my innocence established by the thief of my reputation, and thanked him for his generosity in sending me money to enable me to return to New York, although I stood in no present need of it. This I promised to do very soon; explaining, however, that, in consequence of my stay at the Cape, I had only just arrived in Australia.

To Gertrude I gave as connected a chronicle as possible, of my adventures in the wilds of Africa, telling her of all my hair-breadth escapes, strange diet, and numerous hardships; and how, in the midst of those strange solitudes and perils, I had never ceased, day by day, and hour by hour, to think of her, and pray for her, longing to meet her, never to part again. The pent-up feelings of months overflowed in glowing language, and I passionately reiterated all that I had said before in those happy, peaceful days, when no thought of the dark shadow which was destined to cross my path loomed upon my mental horizon—when a bright career, following upon a long dark day of misery, promised to reward me for all I had suffered in the past. But words, after all, could but feebly express the intensity of my emotions—the depth of that love

which was bound up with my very life, and which, come weal or woe, failure or success, neglect or the reverse, could never, while existence chained me to the world, be effaced or diminished. My soul was linked with hers. Death alone could psychologically divide us. I worshipped her day by day, and hour by hour. I knelt down night by night, and uttered her name in prayer. I cared not to live but for her sake. She was every thing to me.

And how ennobled I felt in the knowledge that I had the love of such a woman! It gave me courage, hope, resolution, strength. I stood before the world invincible. I was a proud man, and I had every reason to be so. But at her shrine I even wept over the memory of the past, and joy and sorrow contended within me for the mastery. I felt alternately depressed and elated, yet ever clung to the one bright hope which alone could carry me in triumph through the world.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WE MEET AGAIN.

Having posted my letters, I strolled out with my companion, Reginald Wade, and Dr. Dawson Sharpe, the surgeon of the steamer, to see life.

Entering an auction-mart, on one side of Collins Street, we had an opportunity of witnessing the auctioneer, hammer in hand. He was selling silver watches just then, in lots of half-a-dozen each. The market at this time was glutted with jewelry, and much of it was unsaleable. "Three-ten—three-ten—three-twelve-six—three-twelve-six—who says more?—going." The half-dozen watches were meanwhile making a circuit of the room; and the harsh tongue of the dark, ill-featured auctioneer was clapping away like a bell-hammer. To my surprise, Dr. Sharpe made a bid at this crisis. "Three-fifteen," shouted the auctioneer, nodding to him, "three-fifteen—three-fifteen. Is there any advance upon three-fifteen?" and

after gazing into the faces over the room for a course of seconds, with his hammer and arm poised in the air, as if he was on the verge of some desperate deed, he let fall the instrument on the desk, and proceeded to submit the next lot.

The lot had been knocked down to the doctor. He drew forth his purse to pay, and was in the act of counting out the three-fifteen, for the half-dozen watches as he thought, and a capital bargain too, when the auctioneer's man came up to him with the watches, and a bill of the same. He thrust the three-fifteen into the hands of the assistant salesman as he was in the act of receiving the watches. The man held out his hand for more money. The doctor thought he wanted to write a receipt upon the bill, and so he glanced at it.

"Sold to Mr. —, 6 Geneva silver watches, at £3 15s.—£22 10s."

"Oh!" said the unlucky lancet-guider in dismay, "I thought the lot was to be three-fifteen. Oh! I'll not have them—give me back the money."

The man, however, without complying, shouted to the auctioneer.

"He thought he was to pocket the lot for three-fifteen."

Dr. Dawson Sharpe was wroth.

"Will you pay the money?" said the low-bred, repulsive individual in the box, evidently a Jew. Melbourne was half made up of Jews. "Twenty-two-ten," he continued.

Meanwhile all eyes, as well as the auctioneer's, were upon the purchaser. The doctor endeavored to explain that he had labored under a misapprehension as to the fact of his buying half-a-dozen watches at three fifteen each; he thought he was to have the lot for that amount.

"Turn him out," shouted the auctioneer, and he gnashed out something more between his teeth, and had a sample of the next lot passed to him.

"Turn that lime-juicer out—go out, Sir," he shouted.

"Give me back my money," said the doctor, in a rage, addressing the man to whom he paid the three-fifteen.

It was declared to be forfeited. The doctor indignantly remonstrated.

"Go out—leave the room," broke from a dozen mouths; he

was compelled to retreat, for the moment, before popular indignation at the interruption.

The doctor thought of springing upon the auctioneer, and dragging him out of his box, for the insult he had offered ; but at my advice he postponed operations ; he, however, vowed vengeance upon the Barabbas, and after the sale was over he would seek redress or satisfaction in some way. I mentioned that he could force the auctioneer to put the lot up again, and only if it sold for less than the price mentioned, would his three-fifteen be taxed in the matter.

“ Oh ! ” said he, “ the scamp will sell the lot to some accomplice for three-fifteen less than he knocked them down to me at, and by so doing, I shall be done.”

This was the first rude lesson I had submitted to me in colonial life. To lie and cheat, baffle and swindle, was at this time and place considered “ quite colonial,” and the perpetrator of these acts of dishonesty was almost applauded ; at any rate, he was looked upon as a sharp, ‘cute fellow, and his gold was as acceptable as the bishop’s.

After quitting the precincts of this mart of commerce, we crossed the street, and entered a much larger place of auction-sales. Our eyes were met as we entered by large bills and colored plans of proposed townships, setting forth in the most glowing terms the advantages of certain land that was then selling in specified lots. “ A champagne lunch ” was printed in large type at the foot of the bills, so we walked into the presence of the auctioneer and the multitude with visions of a feast before us. Sure enough there was a champagne luncheon, the corks were flying and the bottles were foaming on all sides, as we joined the throng.

The capacious auction-room, choked up with packages of merchandise, and exhibiting a ceiling and sky-light shrouded with cobwebs, had its walls hung with even more attractive colored plans of townships, and printed bills enlarging upon the beauties of the same, than had met our gaze at the outer entrance. What wealth was there not left in store for the fortunate purchasers of these lots, especially of the “ corner allotments suitable for public houses.” There was the township of Jika Jika, the one now under sale ; the site appointed for

Jika Jika would have likely been found a desolate swamp if any one had only taken the trouble to ride and wade to the described position, so many miles from the township of——, and “adjoining the high road to Dandenong.” However, it did not much matter whether the township under sale was really as valuable as it was represented to be, or the reverse; for, with very few exceptions, men bought to sell again, and so that they gained money by the transaction, they were careless as to what they sold, or who they sold.

The champagne luncheon was expected to, and did, no doubt, exercise its usual effect in raising the bids, and infusing spirit and speculation into the mass of buyers collected. The auctioneer, who had been busily engaged in talking to a group of speculators, hammer in hand, eating sandwiches, and drinking champagne at intervals, now took his place in the pulpit. All his oratorical powers were at once called into active requisition; he had only to describe a glowing picture of the future of Jika Jika to insure high bids, and plenty of them, for, as he said, “those splendid—gentlemen, those magnificent allotments depicted on the plan before you.” He only wished that he was one of his audience, he would buy them all, and make six hundred per cent. by the transaction.

“Lot 1, a splendid corner allotment suitable for a public house and hotel, and adjoining the town hall (that was to be) in the great centre of the town.”

Such was the attractive style of submitting these unattractive plots of ground to the land-jobbers. The lot, of course, after much rhetorical description, which appealed more to the imagination than any thing of the kind I had before heard, was quickly knocked down at a prodigious price. Lot followed lot in rapid succession; all sold, and the rivalry and excitement among the buyers became warmer and more reckless, as the champagne flowed, and the auctioneer continued to utter their praises. In the mean time, the very land that had only just been sold was being re-disposed of at a considerable advance, either to parties that had only just entered the room, or to others that regretted having let the lots slip them. Thus men were enabled to clear, in some cases, hundreds, and even

thousands of pounds, before leaving the room, where they made their original purchase, for it very frequently happened that the lots advanced considerably in price as the sale proceeded, and by this means alone the early purchasers were enabled to re-sell at a satisfactory profit.

Leaving the scene of the land-sale, we strolled onwards, and entered another of the half-dozen auction-rooms in this street. There we found a very stout, thick-set, thick-voiced Yorkshireman, haranguing his audience loudly from his pulpit, hammer in hand. He was enlarging upon the merits of some Cheshire cheese packed in tins, as we forced ourselves into the crowded room, accompanying his praises by an occasional swallowing of pieces of the commodity, which he declared to be the best "he had ever tasted in his life."

"And only half-a-crown a pound for this cheese, only half-a-crown a pound, I say, for this cheese."

Here he paused, and glanced round the room, and into the faces of his assembled hearers, which proceeding on his part was responded to by some one calling out "penny."

"Penny," repeated the auctioneer, lifting his hammer and his body, and seemingly infused with new life. "Two-and-eight," cried a voice. "Two-and-eight," a nod; "two and nine," another nod; "two-and-ten." "Eleven," ejaculated a Jew, sitting on a keg of butter close to where I stood; "eleven," echoed the Yorkshireman; "two-and-eleven only bid for this splendid, well-conditioned cheese. Really, gentlemen, I must give up the sale, if you don't bid faster;" a nod, and a loud shout of "three shillings, three shillings a pound for this cheese, the best in the market, with the option of taking five or the lot; there's twenty of 'em."

"Penny," shouted the Jew, seated on the butter.

"Three-and-two," almost simultaneously cried some one else.

Here matters reached a crisis, and the auctioneer lifting himself into the air, with the manner of one desperate, and with his right arm elevated, and his hand clasping the weapon with which he appeared to be on the verge of doing some fatal act, and while he suddenly became silent, and allowed his searching eyes to do the work of his tongue, he brought down the hammer with a crack on the rim of his

pulpit, and said, "At three-and-two it is." Upon this declaration those present were relieved from the sudden silence and momentous pause which the manner and attitude of the auctioneer had induced, and all was bustle again.

"Will you take five or the lot?" asked the auctioneer.

"The lot," was the reply.

"You've a bargain," remarked the salesman, and the next moment he proceeded to eat pickles from a quantity handed to him on a sheet of the "Argus" newspaper, which pickles one of his assistants had just pulled out in handfulls from a newly opened keg in the room.

"Here, gentlemen, are the finest pickles I ever tasted—really beautiful pickles. Taste and try, and pass them round." And so saying, he handed the newspaper and its contents to the show-man, who was at once pounced upon by those disposed for pickle-buying.

"Now, what shall I say per pound for the pickles? What shall I say for these well-conditioned pickles?" and so the scene of selling by auction was repeated. The room was filled with all sorts of merchandise in all sorts of conditions, among, and standing, and sitting on the top of which the rough-looking men assembled, mostly of the Jew type, and having their legs encased in outside knee and thigh boots, were indiscriminately gathered. As we were about to take our departure, the auctioneer finding the room and his work rather hot, cried out to his clerk, "Here, take my coat," at the same time stripping the latter garment off his back. It caused a slight laugh among the crowd, but he appeared to be considerably relieved by the subtraction that had taken place, and shouted, and gesticulated, and otherwise conducted himself with renewed energy, and even more boisterous vigor than before.

As I was leaving this delectable spot, I descried the gaunt form and weather-beaten features of Captain Whittlestick sailing towards me on the opposite side of the street, and I went across to join him.

"Hillo! captain," I exclaimed, while our eyes met in a glance of surprise, "when did you arrive?"

"This morning, my boy, with a spanking breeze. When did you?" and he grasped me warmly by the hand.

"Yesterday—just in time to beat you, but you made a quick voyage."

"Yes, that's my style. I crowded on all sail to make up for lost time. How soon did you leave after me?"

"About a week, but we called at several ports on the way, which delayed us, while you had a straight run."

"Well, Washington, this meeting of ours reminds me of old times; doesn't it you? You weren't quite as handsome a fellow then as you are now, though I never saw a more promising sprig for a boy of your age. Only think of my meeting you at the Cape of all the places in the world. I knew you at a glance, your face had changed so little. I'd seen no one from the wreck of the unlucky 'Skimmer of the Seas' before. Miss Morgan, the young lady who took you to New York, invited me to call and see her, but I never did. Poor girl, she lost her only brother and her aunt in the ship. When I met you first you told me, I think, she was still living there."

"Yes," I observed, "until last fall I was a clerk in her father's banking house, in Wall Street. Why didn't you call upon her? She would have been glad to see you."

"Don't ask me that," said he, "I hadn't the heart to meet her or any one else from that ship, although the owners acquitted me of all blame, and I soon got another vessel. We had a terrible time there, Wash, and you were a good friend of mine then. It almost makes me shudder when I think of it. You'll always find a friend in me though," and the bronzed and brawny sailor seemed actually touched as he gave me his horny hand again.

"I've always thought," he continued, "a merciful Providence got me out of that scrape just in the nick of time, and I've thanked God ever since for saving us. But what an awful loss of life there was. We shall never have a narrower escape I guess than that, and but for you I'd have been a dead man."

Before parting he told me where I could find him while he remained in port, and I bade him good-bye, to rejoin my companions.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AN UNEXPECTED CALL FROM A NEW QUARTER.

I had only been in Melbourne three days, when a New York ship arrived, bringing me another letter from Gertrude. It was more than I expected, and oh! how glad I was. The familiar handwriting filled my heart with new joy, and I felt thankful for being there to receive it as soon as it came.

I eagerly but carefully tore open the envelope, and unfolded the precious contents; and as I did so, a small newspaper-cutting dropped into my hand. I read it first, and judge of my surprise when I found it to be an advertisement thus worded:

“**I**NFORMATION WANTED OF WASHINGTON EDMONDS, aged twenty-three, who lived when a child with Kate Wilkins, at Greenfield, near Boston, Mass., and subsequently with Mrs. Bangs, the housekeeper of the Medical College in the city of Boston; and who, in the year 1846, left his home there, and has not since been heard of. If living, he is requested to communicate immediately with the undersigned, respecting family matters of great importance. Any one giving information of the said Washington Edmonds, will be liberally rewarded. If known to be dead, proof of the fact will be paid for.—JOHN FOWLER, Attorney and Counsellor at Law, 10 State Street, Boston, Mass.”

I stood almost dumbfounded with amazement, and a visible agitation took possession of me. What could this mean? Was the mystery about to be exploded, and would the strange wrongs of a life-time be redressed? Who was advertising for me? Was it my father, my mother—my——? Had I been the victim of some dark scheme to defraud me of my birthright, and had the fact only been just discovered? or was the plotter in that strange drama, in which I was handed over to the tender mercies of Kate Wilkins, himself repentant, and desirous of atoning in the future for a base injury in the past? I had through life believed myself the object of some secret machinations, and I never failed to associate that dark-faced man in the carriage, described by Mrs. Wilkins, with the

cause of the mysterious proceeding which left me in the arms of a strange woman, in a lonely country-road at nightfall. There must have been some strong motive for all that occurred then. Who was that dark-faced man, entreating a startled woman at the roadside, and tempting her with gold and bright promises, to take home the babe that lay in the arms of a little girl in the carriage, from which he had just alighted? From whence had he brought it? If his story were true, why such anxiety and care, and offers of money, and secrecy of movement? "Depend upon it," said I to myself, "that man, whoever he was, whether acting for himself or another, was accomplishing a cheat in doing what he did that night. I believe him intuitively to have been a knave, and that money was the root of his crime." Hastily turning to the letter, I read:

"New York, January 23, 1853.

"MY DEAR WASHINGTON: No letter yet. What can have become of you? I have been waiting, oh! so anxiously, for many long, long, weary months, to hear from you; and sometimes I fear that the worst must have happened, and that I shall never see you more. I write this in the midst of my suspense, but with a dreadful feeling of uncertainty as to whether you will ever receive it. O my dear Washington! how you would pity me if you knew how very wretched I really am. I cannot write this without tears, and my heart seems breaking all the time. I begin to feel as if I didn't much care what became of me; and, if it were not for hoping against hope, that all will yet be well with you, I think I should die. I am growing older and more haggard in appearance every day, I do so fret and pine about you. My mother tries to console me; but what consolation can any one here afford me? I can only look to Heaven for relief in my great grief, and I always find comfort in looking from Nature up to Nature's God.

"My mind is so much absorbed by the one theme that I can hardly bring myself to think of anything else. But there is one event that I write about specially, and it is of the greatest interest to you. The inclosed advertisement for you appeared in the New York papers, and father answered it to say that

you had gone to Australia, but were expected to return. He has heard nothing more about it yet. It is about a week since he wrote. Now what do you think this can be? Perhaps some of your relatives are searching for you, and the mystery is cleared up. I am very anxious to know more, and have every expectation that we shall very soon, when I will write immediately, giving you all the particulars.

“I read such a dreadful account of an affray with ‘Bush-rangers,’ in Australia, a few days ago, that I can hardly resist a feeling of apprehension that you have met with some similar disaster, which has prevented you from writing. And perhaps you are lying sick in a strange land, with no one to care for or help you. Oh! how my heart does flutter when I think of all that may have happened to you, and what silent anguish I suffer; for hope deferred—the hope of a letter—maketh the heart sick, indeed. How I do wish you had written, and how I grieve and cry because you have not. But I will endure as long as life will let me, although I have a presentiment that unless I do hear from you, that will not be for long. The days and nights hang upon me very heavily, and the world seems to have lost its charm since you went away. I care for nothing but to think of you. I droop; I have grown pensive and unhappy. I have been watching for the post-man for months, and every time he comes I almost tremble lest there should be no letter from you; and often, when I find there is none, I sit down and cry. It is a relief to me to tell you how I feel, even when I am uncertain whether you will ever receive these lines, and that if you do they may possibly be my last.

“I seldom go out; but I sometimes think I shall go distracted if I don’t seek some change; and mother is always urging this upon me; but I have no heart for society, and I can hardly bear the sight of strange faces in the street, for I always find myself looking anxiously for you, thinking that you might have just returned. Vain and foolish hope, I know; but, Washington, dearest, I cannot help it; and I invariably come home feeling sad and disappointed.

“I must not forget to tell you that Mr. Perkins died on the morning after we visited him in the prison, and before father could do anything towards obtaining his release. What an

unfortunate thing that was. I should have been so happy but for him. Alas! how dependent we are upon others for our happiness, and how often the innocent suffer because of the guilt of others!

"I can only resign myself to the care of an all-merciful Providence, and pray that He may guide and protect you over the shoals and quicksands of life, and that all will yet be well. Tears fill my eyes as I write; my bosom heaves; I can hardly draw my breath; I feel the old choking sensation in my throat; my hand trembles; I sob aloud; so, Washington, dearest! no more now. I am overcome.

"Your loving GERTIE."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE VISION BY THE RIVER.

The grief which this letter caused me was intense, and again I reproached myself bitterly, while the hot tears of regret coursed down my pallid features. I would have sacrificed my very existence in atonement, if it would not have been robbery towards her; for I yet hoped and hoped ardently, to marry the woman that wrote me thus, and the death she prophesied would have caused a blank in my life which I had no desire to survive. I wept like a woman that night on the banks of the Yarra Yarra, and imagination carried me to her side, and I felt that the force of my mere will had sent comfort to her heart.

The stream rippled at my feet; the roar of the surf at Sandridge surged upon my ear, when suddenly I felt a hand placed on my shoulder. I looked round, but no one was there! Afar off I seemed to see a ghost-like phantom receding heavenward through the air. I recognized the form; it was that of Gertrude, robed in white and surrounded by a divine halo. Immediately the presentiment of her death seized upon me, and in distraction I plunged into the flowing river and dis-

appeared beneath its silver surface, for the moonlight made the air almost as clear as day, and lent its lustre to all around.

* * * * *

I was a practised swimmer ; but I had no inclination to put forth an effort. If she had gone I had no desire to stay. She was all in all to me. She was life, vitality, all that made the world worth living for. She was the living idol I worshipped ; if that were dead, then I had no wish to live. I would join her, or perish for evermore. My love was too deep, too heartfelt, too enthralling, too sincere, to allow me to exist without her. No ! our lives must terminate together. We were one. Separation for ever in this world would be agony which I could not endure. The river murmured, the moon shone, and I drifted towards that bourne whence, happily for us all, no traveller returns. Suddenly I felt a tug at my hair.

I imagined at first that some intrepid Newfoundland dog had interested himself in my behalf, but a human voice dispelled the thought. I was drawn to the river's bank, and in a semi-unconscious state I lay there.

Who was it that had rescued me ?

Looking upward I saw the figure of a man leaning over me. Then I heard a voice. It was strangely familiar. It was Reginald Wade's !

"How came you to jump into the river, old boy, and give me the trouble of fishing you out ?"

"I wanted to die—to drown myself—to follow her to heaven—to——"

"What's all that ?"

A suspicion crossed my mind.

"Was it you that touched me on the shoulder ?"

"Yea, verily, it was."

"You !" I said with faint emphasis, and making an effort to rise.

"Yes ; who else did you think it was ?"

"I thought it was her spirit."

"Oh ! I see you're dreaming. Come along home."

I sank down again, with my head upon my arm, wondering if she were really dead, or if what I had seen was purely the

effect of imagination. But I was not in a thinking mood; reason seemed almost to have abandoned me, and the shock I had received had prostrated my physical strength.

If she were dead, I would rather that Reginald Wade had not appeared to save me; if not, then I was grateful to him.

But I lay there nearly incapable of effort, a half-drowned man, with dim fantastic sights flitting through the chambers of a bewildered brain.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

STARTLING AND ROMANTIC DEVELOPMENTS.

I managed to crawl to the Prince of Wales hotel with him, and here we shared a room in common. On the next morning I awoke feeling physically little the worse for the adventure of the previous night, but with a mind full of gloomy forebodings. My imagination had been very much excited, and I was still laboring under its effects. I felt depressed and ashamed of my attempt at suicide, and my face flushed, and I grew angry at the thought of my own folly and weakness. Why suicide? It is only the refuge of cowards. Why should I, who had bearded the lion in his den, thus shrink before a shadow and seek in oblivion, relief—and from what? Had I not done a wrong to the woman I loved? My only excuse was, that love is next door to insanity, and I had gone a step too far unconsciously.

* * * * *

A week after this I received another letter from Gertrude. I read it with a wild avidity, and thus it ran;

“New-York, January 30, 1853.

“DEAREST WASHINGTON: O, Washington, dearest! I am almost distracted at not hearing from you. What can be the reason of this long, painful silence? I strive in vain to account for or reconcile myself to it. But I will not despair.

Oh! if you are alive why have you not written? If you only knew how I feel you would—— My thoughts are wandering, so that I cannot finish the sentence.

“I write now to tell you that we have heard more of the advertisement, and from no less a personage than your mother’s uncle, Mr. Edward Beresford—I have his card—who came all the way from England to find you.

“From all that father could gather from him, it appears that you are the central figure in a very complicated case, and it has excited me more than you can imagine.

“Your father, he said, was a Mr. Duncan, a native of Newfoundland, and the son of the bishop there, and while on a visit to England, he became acquainted with and married the daughter of Sir George Gibson. She had a large fortune in her own right, and a life interest in it, excepting a small portion for her own use, was settled on your father at the time of the marriage; and afterwards she made a will devising the whole of her property absolutely to him, in the event of no children surviving her.

“I say this to let you know exactly; and if I left it to father to tell, he might forget half the story.

“Less than a year afterwards they left England for a tour in America. They went first to Newfoundland, and then came on to the United States; and they were living at Boston when you were born.

“It is now charged by your mother’s relations, founded on some discovery they have recently made, that your father took measures to destroy your identity, with the presumed object of possessing himself of the property devised by the will.

“When you were only a week old, he induced your mother to consent to your being put in charge of a nurse—her health being delicate. He then told her that he had made satisfactory arrangements with a woman, who called on the next day, and was seen by your mother. She did not, however, allow her to take the child out of her sight; but soon afterwards she became very sick with a fever, which made her delirious, and it was during this illness that you were removed, and she never saw you afterwards.

“When she got better her husband told her that you were dead, and showed her the undertaker’s bill for burying you; and took her to Mount Auburn Cemetery and pointed out your grave, and the monument in the stone-cutter’s hands, which was soon to cover it; and the nurse who had dressed you in your white sepulchral clothes condoled with her on her loss.

“But the suspicious circumstance has transpired that your father procured the dead body of an infant child at that very time from the city hospital, and it was this he buried as his own. Kate Wilkins is to be an important witness in the case; for it was through her that you were traced to Mrs. Bangs’s. Then there is Mr. Barker, a Boston lawyer, who had something to do with this strange affair, and the girl who accompanied your father in the carriage on that night when he gave you to Mrs. Wilkins in the lane. The girl it seems was a younger sister of the nurse, and the nurse it was who obtained the dead baby for your father, and brought it home secretly the same night. She has been found and confesses to the fraud she lent herself to, and for which she was paid two hundred and fifty dollars.

“Your father is now in Europe, but your mother came over with her uncle, to assist in making these investigations. She has been separated from her husband, I understand, since she made the discovery. I hear that several London detectives were also here for the same purpose. I expect to see all about it in the papers every day, and I am sure it will create quite a sensation. You are to be written to by the next mail, asking you to return at once; and I don’t know what isn’t to be done by the lawyers in the case.

“I expect to see or hear of your mother before long; but all I have written is only what father told me. And is it not wonderful? What a romance in real life. I do hope that you will get this as soon as it reaches Melbourne—it will make you so glad—and that you will lose no time in returning, for my poor heart is breaking to know what has become of you.

“With constant prayers for your safety, I remain, my dear Washington,

“Your ever loving

“GERTIE.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A NEW DISCOVERY.

My worst suspicions and my best anticipations were realized. The secret was divulged, the mystery unravelled. Right had asserted itself through the mist of Time, and Truth and Justice, as if by a natural law, were undoing the work of Evil, whose triumph is but for a day. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit.*

What a strange, romantic story I had to reflect upon! What startling details of parental fraud and duplicity! Alas! that my mother should have been the wife of such a man! If there be one guilty craving baser than another, it is that which would lead a man to rob his wife of her child, and his child of its inheritance, for the sake of paltry gold. Such a one must have lost all the higher instincts of humanity, and become dead to every noble impulse and sense of duty. He must have hardened his nature to crime, and cruelty must have written its mark in every line of his face, and planted the heart of a brute in the breast of a man. He must have consigned his moral being to hopeless degradation, and shaken hands with Infamy. Against him the gates of heaven must have closed forever.

And was I the child of such a man? I would rather not have heard it. I would rather not have been born. The man who had so grossly wronged the woman he had sworn to honor and succor through life, and cast her child adrift on the world, and all for mere pelf, could have no claim upon me for filial affection, and I had a right to regard him as an enemy.

These were the thoughts that followed my receipt of the letter, and I felt that my indignation was righteous. But my mother! How the heart-strings fastened around the sublime name! She was living, and I should yet see her; the mysterious ideal I had worshipped so tenderly was at length found, and before long I might hope to twine my arms in fondness round her sacred form. The sense of her reality almost bewildered me by its novelty. Before, her existence had always

appeared mythical; it was now presented to me as a fact. The great discovery of my life was made.

I had hitherto communicated no details of my early history to Reginald Wade, but I now felt disposed to tell him the strange story.

"Wade," said I to him on the evening following my receipt of Gertrude's last letter, "I don't think I shall be able to join you in that trip to the diggings. I am urged to return to New York immediately. A letter I received to-day makes it more imperative than ever."

"Oh! what matter what they say? Let them wait. They'd laugh at you for your pains, if you ran away from Australia, after being in the country less than a fortnight."

"But I'm anxious to get back myself—very anxious. I'm the newly-found heir to a large property. It's altogether the most curious affair you ever heard of."

Mr. Wade opened his eyes in wonder, surprised doubtless more by my enthusiasm of manner than my words.

"By Jove! you remind me of the Man of Mystery, or The Mysterious Man, I forget which, I once read of in a novel. Don't keep me in suspense. What is it? Any romantic developments?"

"Yes," said I, "and if you'll put on a grave face and listen, I'll tell you the history of the case."

"Mr. Edward Beresford!" interrupted my companion, when I mentioned that gentleman as my great uncle on the maternal side. "An uncle of mine married into the Beresford family, and I know an Edward Beresford. I wonder if it's the same? But go on."

I resumed my reading from Gertrude's letter.

"Mr. Duncan, the son of the bishop of Newfoundland!" he exclaimed, repeating my words with a wild look of amazement, and springing from his chair in great excitement. "I am thunderstruck! Do you know who I am?"

"No," said I, sharing his agitation, and feeling that I was on the brink of some new discovery.

"Well then I'll tell you. My mother was the daughter of Bishop Duncan, and her brother Henry married the only daughter of Sir George Gibson. If you are their son, you're

my cousin," and he extended his hand. "This is strange, certainly. Then you actually dined with your own father in London, and didn't know it." Do you remember that strange dream of mine? How wonderful it seems in the light of events! I shall believe in dreams after this."

The recollection again flashed upon me that the dark-complexioned man to whom Reginald Wade had introduced me, and who dined with us at the Athenæum Club, was a Mr. Henry Duncan.

I trembled with emotion.

"Was he really my father?" I asked in tremulous accents.

"If that letter tells the truth, he was most certainly. Heavens! what a romance! If he had only known it. I can hardly believe him to have been such a villain. I always supposed him to be childless. He had never but the one that was supposed to have died in America. If it can be proved that what you have read to me is fact, you are heir to property worth more than a hundred thousand pounds; and what you gain Henry Duncan loses, besides his loss of reputation and——"

I drew a long breath, and sighed heavily.

"I can quite understand your feeling anxious to return," he resumed, "and since you've made this revelation to me, I'm determined, with your permission, to go with you. I want to be on the spot when the case is tried: and I may as well tell you now as later, that this will be bad news for my father, who I know has lent Henry Duncan a considerable sum of money, which there is now of course little or no chance of his ever getting back."

"I'm sorry for that," said I; "it's an unfortunate circumstance in the case."

"Yes, so far as it goes it is, but it would be far better that nine hundred and ninety-nine should be ruined in such a way than that one should be cheated of his birth-right. Give me your hand, old fellow; if it cost me every shilling I have, or ever hope to have in the world, I'd do all I could to secure you justice. You have been wronged, bitterly, cruelly wronged, and you must be recompensed for the injury and loss." Then he paused, but continued: "I can hardly believe my eyes and ears. That we should have been so long together,

so intimately associated, without being conscious of our relationship; and that such a web of mystery should have surrounded you without a word having been said before on the subject; and that all should have transpired as it has done, is to me something so marvellous that I can hardly reconcile myself to its reality. It seems more like a fiction or a dream than a series of actual occurrences in this matter-of-fact age. You may consider yourself henceforth the hero of a drama in real life, in which I am one of the subordinate characters. To you the world has indeed been a stage, but there are few such players."

I paced the room in excitement, rapidly revolving in my mind the strange events of my checkered career; and all night through I lay awake, joyfully yet anxiously looking forward to meeting my long-lost mother, and marrying the girl I loved.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A DEADLY ENCOUNTER.

There was no steamer loading at the time for any part of Europe or America, and no passenger ship was advertised to sail from Melbourne to the United States till more than a month later. Sailors deserted their ships as soon after their arrival as possible, and decamped to the gold diggings in search of the big nuggets of which they had heard so much. The consequence was that very few of all the vessels in port were able to find crews at any price, so hundreds of them remained at anchor in Hobson's Bay for months together, waiting for sailors to man them. But little reliance was, therefore, to be placed upon punctuality of departure, even when the day of sailing was advertised. In many cases men who had worked before the mast on their way out to Australia could now have become shipowners, and the temptation for others to do as they had done was obviously very great.

I called at the address given me by Captain Whittlestick, and consulted him as to the best way of getting back to New York.

"I calculate you'll have to take it easy. I don't know exactly when I shall get away with my ship, but I guess I'll be off in three or four weeks, or at least about as soon as any of 'em after my cargo's discharged. I'm bound for Callao, in ballast, and from there shall go to the Chincha Islands and load with guano for Liverpool. If you like I'll take you and your friend to Callao as passengers, and there you can step on board the English steamer for Panama, and then cross the Isthmus and take the Aspinwall steamer for New York. You'll get there quicker in that way, I guess, than by going direct by a sailing vessel."

"Thank you, Captain, for your offer," I replied, "and if we can't do better, we'll certainly avail ourselves of the *Orinoco*. I should like to see South America, and we might as well go that way as any other."

"Yes, sir-ree!" ejaculated Whittlestick, at the same time rolling a quid of tobacco in his mouth and resting his limbs by placing his feet on the top of a chair. "Do your travelling and sight-seeing while you're young, and when you're old you'll be content to stay at home and feel yourself as happy as a clam at high water. I'd been all round the world twice before I was twenty, and I've had my backbone cut into tooth-picks since then, yet I'm not a very old salt even now. Yes, sir, I've seen pretty near all there is to be seen in all creation, and that comes of beginning to see the world with your eyes wide open when you're young, old cuss. You'll find very few, I guess, whose timbers have been shivered like mine, but I never say die, for while there's life there's hope."

Reginald Wade approved of the South American route, but signified his accommodating spirit by saying, "I'll go anywhere and anyhow you please, if you'll only make that trip to the diggings with me. I can't leave Australia, old fellow, without seeing something of the Gold Fields; it would be absurd—eh? We can drive there and back easily, and have plenty of time to spare before the *Orinoco*, or any other vessel that we can sail by, is ready, and we might just as well be seeing something of the country as vegetating in Melbourne."

I assented, on condition that we were to return in time to take passage by the first vessel advertised to sail for the United States, in the event of Captain Whittlestick's ship not being ready, and accordingly we equipped a dog-cart and tandem, and on the next day started for Mount Alexander.

Previous to my departure I mailed another letter to Gertrude, and anxiously enquired if there was any letter for me at the post-office, but found there was not.

It was noon when, leaving Elizabeth Street behind, we headed towards the village of Flemington, along the main road to all the gold-fields. The land on either side was uninviting, and studded here and there with groups of tents; the aspect of the former appeared to be undergoing some change, which, however much it might enhance its future value, could certainly not be said to have added to its picturesqueness. In some places it was evidently being cleared for building purposes; in other and rocky places, it was being dug into quarries, while everywhere the road was as unfinished as the landscape looked cut up. However, the work of road-making was progressing briskly, for we passed several gangs of men levelling it by spade-cutting and stone-shovelling. Here and there, too, were collected piles of stones, sitting in front of which were men who, before they came to Australia, had been accustomed to a very different kind of occupation, engaged in breaking them. Men of all professions, and gentlemen of no profession whatever, were frequently to be found exercising themselves "on the roads," in return for ten shillings a day, with a free tent, wood, and water. Such employment was the common resource of thousands who were, for the time, destitute of means, and could procure no other occupation. Lawyers, surgeons, and even clergymen, were often to be found acting as bullock drivers; and similar changes occurred to many an ex-habitue of St. James's, to whom the club-house and the park had once been as familiar as were now the road-making pick and shovel. But still, ten shillings a day was a sum worth earning, and really the work was not hard, for, in the first place, the majority were so unaccustomed to manual labor, that they could not work hard; and, in the next place, they were in a gold country, and they wouldn't.

Now and again we passed the skeletons or carcasses of cattle lying at the road-side, which had sunk under the heavy dray-labor of the goods traffic with the mines ; and these, with other signs, acted as a fair index of the state of the colony at the time, and of the premature mortality brought about even more among men than the brutes that were goaded to their toil by the sudden influx of population, and the struggle for gold. The energies of the frame were overtaxed, and what with that, and wet and windy tents, and unwholesome food, thousands were hurried into premature graves, and now rested among the unrecorded dead on the diggings and elsewhere. Bullock and horse-teams were passed by the dozen, each heavily laden with the necessaries of life, and the requirements of the population at the mines. Equestrians and pedestrians, singly or in droves, lent animation to the entire road ; the former were chiefly diggers, who were returning to the mines, most likely after what they called a frolic. Those on foot were either "new chums," who were unable, or experienced hands who were unwilling, to afford the expense of a horse ; and each of these carried more or less of a kit, slung across the shoulder. The main street of Flemington, through which all the traffic passed, was alive with throngs of the going and returning.

On arriving at a wooden bridge, built across the Salt Water river, we were charged a toll of two shillings ; this construction yielding, by this means, to its owner, nearly a thousand pounds per week. We now came upon an extensive plain, at first bearing crops, but, after a few miles, bare of every thing but stunted grass. Here, far away to the west and north, thirty miles at least, the view was horizoned by a chain of rolling hills, so lending something of the picturesque to a flat extent of country, whose stunted trees had been cut down and hacked to pieces for firewood by the straggling occupants of various tents and shanties, and travellers, and whose ragged stumps were alone left to add ugliness to monotony. Moreover, the plain was more or less cut up with the marks of heavy drays, several of which were now to be seen dragging their slow length across the prospect ; this divergence from the main road having been adopted in order to escape the mud and gullies with which it abounded. Pedestrians and

horsemen, however, continued to follow each other over the beaten track.

Towards sun-set we reached the vicinity of the Green Hills, a pastoral station, twenty-five miles from Melbourne. The scenery at this point suddenly changed, and a beautiful prospect greeted the eye. A picturesque confusion of hill and dale, backed by mountain lands and giant forest, were the most prominent traits of the landscape; while near us, and between, stretched a fertile patch of grass-land, intersected by a rivulet. After this we continued on through the forest highway a few miles further, till we reached the Bush Inn, a house of call for everybody, and being on the borders of the bush, notoriously frequented by bushrangers. Here we put up for the night.

On the following morning we resumed our journey, the road leading through the Black Forest, where the gullies were even worse than before, and the danger of being "bailed up," considerable. The reader will understand that "bailing up" is synonymous with "sticking up." The usual plan of proceeding with bush-rangers, who generally travel in couples, is to ride up, one on either side of the intended victim, and each, simultaneously, to present his pistol at the head of the object of their attentions, with a request that he halt and deliver, which, if he be wise, he promptly complies with. He is then searched, and every thing serviceable about him is appropriated. If, however, he asks for sufficient money to carry him to his destination, these fellows in general comply; but if he makes much display of his indignation, he runs a great risk of being tied to a tree, and left there till some passer-by liberates him.

The Black Forest, alike with the other forests of Australia, was as light and airy as an English park, affording but little shelter from the vivid sun-light which blazed above us.

"Talk of the sun, and lo! a ray appears"—a polite version of the original. We were joking on the subject of bush-rangers, when suddenly two men rode up to us, at a rapid pace, and presented pistols.

We were too well used to arms not to use them, and instinctively I seized my revolver, and fired at the nearest man, and

received a shot through my hat in return. Wade fired at the other, and the bullet took effect, for the man fell back apparently wounded, upon which his horse bounded off, with the rider still on his back.

With my revolver pointed at the head of the one I had shot at, who I now saw was bleeding profusely from a wound near the right shoulder, I eyed him steadily. Had he raised his horse-pistol to fire the second barrel, he would have been a dead man in five seconds.

"Don't fire," said he; "we are old friends. I know you."

Through a somewhat altered exterior I recognized the mysterious individual I had helped out of the sack in the kitchen-closet, at Mrs. Bangs's, and with whom I had subsequently renewed acquaintance so unexpectedly in the New York boarding-house.

"This is a strange meeting," said I. "How came you here?"

He cast a pitiful look at his bleeding breast.

"You saved my life once; you've taken it now," he gasped, without heeding my question. "I forgive you. I'll not take yours. Gentlemen, good-by! Don't fire at a retreating man," and he wheeled his horse round to depart.

"Stay," said I, "you've nothing more to fear from us. Let me dress your wound. Dismount!"

"Honor bright?" said he.

I reassured him by a nod, and he complied. A gush of blood came from his wound, and trickled to the ground, as he made the effort.

"I'm bleeding to death," he said faintly and sadly.

"Wait a moment, and I'll staunch your wound."

"Have you a flask?"

I handed it to him, and he drank its contents at a draught.

"Now sit down, and lean your head against that stump."

He did so, and laying his breast and shoulder bare, I beheld a fissure, through which the vital fluid was ebbing in a copious stream.

"I cannot recover; O God! I shall die," he exclaimed, his courage forsaking him at the prospect of death.

“Don’t trouble yourself about that. Keep quiet,” and I probed the wound for the bullet, but it was too far in to be reached by my finger or my pen-knife, and I had no instrument with me with which I could have extracted it. This being the case, all that I could do was to dress his wound, and lift him into the dog-cart. Then I mounted his horse, leaving Reginald to drive, while I rode in company to Kyneton, where we obtained medical assistance. But the surgeon was no more successful in his attempt to extract the bullet than I had been, and he finally abandoned all hope, and re-dressed the wound.

The patient was easy but weak, and called constantly for brandy, of which he drank a bottle in two hours, without showing its effect. He appeared friendly and talkative, and I drew him into conversation respecting his former life.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

DESPERATE DEEDS.

“Ah!” said the wounded bushranger, with a deep groan, “I’ve been a very unfortunate fellow, but I might have done well, if I’d only started on the right track. I read ‘Robinson Crusoe,’ and ‘Tom Cringle’s Log,’ and Marryatt’s novels, and they turned my head. I ran away to sea before I was sixteen, and I’ve been a rover ever since. I was mate of a slaver once, and a pirate after that. I was tried for piracy and murder at Boston—and hanged!” Here he seemed to be seized with a convulsive shudder, and sighed deeply. “I escaped with my life by a miracle then, and worked my passage to New York, on board a schooner. I had a hard time after that on shore, and was glad when I got a third officer’s place on a Liverpool packet. I saved some money, and resolved to quit a sea-faring life, and was leading a shore-life when I met you by accident at that boarding-house. Then I came out here, and after trying my luck at the diggings for a while, took to the bush, the wildest life a

man can lead, and see what it brings him to at last. My 'chum' that you saw had been 'lagged' (transported); he made his escape from Van Diemen's Land, across the strait, in a boat, with his fetters on. We went at first from station to station, 'sticking up' every body. At one of them we found fourteen men in the hut, and one standing at the door, as we rode up.

" 'Have you heard that the bushrangers are out?' my mate asked.

" 'Yes, I have,' said the other.

" 'Then we are two of them;' and we presented our revolvers, and threatened to shoot the first man that stirred hand or foot.

" 'Are there any prisoners among you?' asked my mate again.

" 'I am one,' said a big, muscular fellow, without moving.

" 'Then get up and tie this man's arms together,' and he repeated the order till the whole lot were pinioned. Then while I stood at the door on guard, he walked up and down the hut, telling them all they might be good men or scoundrels, but he wouldn't hurt a hair of their heads if he could help it. Said he: 'We've been forced to take to this life, and all we want is money, and money we will have, come what may. I'll soon show you whether I'm game or not. I'll go straight into the master's house, and bring out single-handed the man I want, no matter who's there. So beware, my men; if any one of you moves an inch, he's a dead man.'

"He then left the hut, while I remained on guard, and went into the squatter's house, where nothing was known of what had been going on in the hut. He walked straight into the sitting-room, where several ladies and gentlemen were, and made them lay all the money and jewelry they had about them on the table. Then, after gathering up all the valuables, he locked the door on them, bidding them not to stir, and searched the other rooms for whatever was worth taking. Dinner was just ready, so he had it served by the cook and another woman in the kitchen, and after he had made a hearty meal, he relieved me at the hut, while I did the same. We

carried off a good deal of plunder that week. I remember we found one hut with a lot of constables in, who were after us, and one of them rushed at my mate, when he presented his pistol, but he fell dead the next instant. 'How d'ye like that, eh?' said he. 'Now, then, I'm ready for another,' but not a man dared to repeat the experiment.

"Ours was a bold, exciting life, I can tell you; and we didn't always get off unscratched. Fancy prowling about the wilderness, month after month; and night after night camping out in the open air, with nothing to cheer our camping-ground but a log-fire; seldom associating with any one beyond our two selves, and exposed to all sorts of dangers and hardships. I remember one night we were pounced upon by the police, while we were quietly smoking before the camp-fire. I had a pair of horse-pistols in my belt, and I shot the first man I saw off his horse; and I was just being made prisoner by another, when a bullet from my mate killed him, as he cried, 'Surrender!' A shot whizzed through my hair, a second after, as I sprang across his horse, and dashed away at full speed. I heard several shots fired immediately afterwards, in rapid succession, and then the tramp of a horse close at my heels. We were both at a full gallop, but I kept on my course till my imagined pursuer was within a few yards of me, when I drew up on one side to fire, but the other horseman pushed on, avoiding me. I saw his figure pass before me, and disappear through the forest, and then I knew it was my mate. I followed in the same direction, and had nearly reached the mountains when my horse dropped dead, bruising me severely in the fall. I could tell you a good deal more, but I haven't the strength. Pour me out some more brandy, please; I feel very weak."

"Now," I said, "I'll leave you, so that you may rest and remain quiet."

"Ah!" he sighed, "a long rest, I fear."

"Have you any money?" I inquired.

"Yes, sixty sovereigns and some 'nuggets' and 'dust' in my belt."

"Well, keep yourself calm, and I'll see you to-morrow. I'll tell the landlord of the inn to take good care of you, and the

doctor will be here again this afternoon. Good-by; take care of yourself," and I left him.

As I was about to leave the house, one of the police, with knee-boots and spurs on, came up to me, and said:

"What about the wounded man up-stairs? who shot him?"

"I did," was the reply.

"Then I arrest you. Who is he?"

"Look at that," said I, taking off my hat, and pointing to the bullet-hole. "I had a narrow escape. He fired that shot, and I returned it. We were 'stuck up' by him and another in the Black Forest, and we resisted—that is all."

"Well," said he, "you'll both have to be examined; and there's a second charge against you—horse-stealing."

"Horse-stealing!" I exclaimed. "Oh! you mean that horse, I suppose."

"I mean the horse you rode when you came here."

"Oh!" I replied, "that was the horse the man that shot at me rode; I mounted in order to make room for him in the dog-cart."

"We don't know anything about that," said he, "we only know that the horse is down on our lists as stolen. The marks on him are plain enough; there can be no mistake about his identity. You and your friend will have to come with us to the police-office."

Just then Reginald Wade made his appearance, in company with another of the police, who had, I could see, been questioning him in like manner.

"We're under arrest, Washington," were his words. "We ought to have left that fellow to take care of himself."

"Oh! no; it's all right," said I, "mercy is no crime. We have only to state the facts before the magistrate, and we shall be discharged."

As ill luck would have it, however, the magistrate had gone to Saw-Pit Gully, and he failed to return in time to give the case a hearing that day; so we were locked up together in a cell for the night, during which Mr. Wade was in anything but an amiable mood, and vented his reproaches upon me rather plentifully for my part in the transaction.

On the next morning we were conducted into the court-room, when the police gave their evidence, which consisted chiefly of the conversation they had with each of us, after which the magistrate adjourned to institute an *ante mortem* examination in the room where the wounded man lay, and whither we were accordingly taken. I was surprised at the change which a single night had made in his appearance. He was now pale, wan, and emaciated, with sunken eyes, bright but deathly, and apparently so weak that he could hardly move or speak.

He recognized me by a nod and a slight motion of the hand, and was evidently disturbed by the entry of the magistrate and police. He, however, allowed himself to be sworn willingly, and gave his testimony in a weak and almost inaudible voice. I listened with bated breath as these words fell one by one from his dying lips :

“We stuck them up in the Black Forest—both sides fired—we were both hit—brought me here to dress my wounds—I deserved it—I took the horse from Black’s Station—he mounted him to make room for me in the dog-cart. They’re all right—no charge against either—both very kind to me.”

A sigh of relief escaped me.

“James Fowler”—this was the name he had given—said the magistrate, “do you recognize in this room the gentlemen you and your companion fired at on that occasion?”

A feeble “Yes,” and the magistrate said he thought it unnecessary to go further, and discharged us.

“The more of these bushrangers that are served in the same way,” remarked the magistrate privately, after leaving the room, “the better for the country. But I admire that fellow’s honesty in telling the truth.”

“Yes,” said I, “that man deserved to have done better in life. Suppose he recovers, what will become of him?”

“Then we’ll hang him, of course,” was the reply.

So in any event, a limit was put to the dark and checkered career of the man who had escaped the gallows once only to find it awaiting him again. I felt sorry that what was meant for an act of kindness on my part, when a boy, should have led to such an unexpected termination.

CHAPTER XL.

A RUN FOR LIFE.

Shortly after noon, on the same day, we resumed our journey towards Mount Alexander.

A creek-bed, full of deep but deserted holes, ran parallel with the road, part of the way, and this was the first sign we saw of the actual diggings. Soon after this, we passed numerous tents and rough wooden shanties, and then we drove in full view of the gold-fields. Everything wore a look of disorder, for man had on all sides destroyed the beautiful in supplying his wants. Ragged stumps of trees that had been cut down for fire-wood were alone left, where the green waving foliage had once sparkled in the splendors of the riant morning, ere the wild man had been driven away before the ruthless tide of invasion; heaps of sand, broken ground, and gullies of mud, were now to be seen instead of the verdure that once crowned the hills, and, with its carpet of emerald, brightened and lent luxuriance to the plain. Every thing before me contrasted harshly with what it had been when, in a state of nature, the landscape was gay with the lovely handiwork of Flora; when the aborigine danced in his native glee, and every living thing disported in the gladness of its existence.

Hundreds of flags, suspended from poles above the roofs of as many houses, fluttered in the breeze. These served to guide the diggers to the various stores, doctors' shops, and other places where some public want was ready to be supplied, at prices which were at once enormous and profitable to the sellers.

On the following morning, we set out for Bendigo, another great gold-field, distant thirty miles from the Mount Alexander diggings. Leaving behind the rolling granite country around the latter district, we arrived at the base of a barrier of steep rocky ranges, which here rose directly across the road, and distinctly marked the commencement of the gold country. The hills were not lofty, but they rose with fine sweeping outlines from the plain into bold, isolated

masses against the clear sky, and were clothed with a profusion of forest and verdure to their very summits. The road by a steep ascent reached a gap in the hills, commanding a magnificent view to the south, with Mount Alexander rising in solitary beauty out of undulating plains, and shadowy lowlands, and misty mountain ranges far beyond. In the opposite direction we overlooked the dark forested ridges and deep intervening hollows of the Bendigo goldfield. The gap in the hills was abrupt, and passing through it we immediately descended by a steep, narrow gully, which, gradually widening, led us to the head of a picturesque and fertile valley, with wooded slopes, and verdant gullies branching off right and left, and a wide but low alluvial bottom, through which wound a creek that, here and there expanding, formed a chain of water holes. This was the Bendigo valley.

After following it for about a mile, we came to several tents on the margin of the creek, the first signs of our approach to the great centre of attraction. Continuing on our way, the tents, although still scattered, became more numerous, till at length the slopes and flats were studded with them, while large patches of upturned yellow earth in the midst of the grassy plain or "flat," showed that we had reached the outskirts of the diggings.

On the banks of the creek, men were standing over tubs of auriferous earth, or "washing stuff," as it is called, which they worked about with a spade, occasionally tilting out the muddy water, and baling in fresh from the creek. Very soon the tents became as thickly packed as houses in a town, and the road passed between rows of large stores, shops, auction-rooms, and such like, while beyond and around were seen, instead of green flats and grassy gullies, vast level areas covered with gravel, clay, and sand, and burrowed with innumerable gold-diggers' "holes." The creek here appeared close to the road, and on its opposite bank we observed a reef of red rock, jagged and pointed, every chink and crevice of which bore evidence of having been carefully cleared of the earth, which in the natural order of things had once been collected there. This was the famous "Golden Point," the spot where gold was first discovered at Bendigo, in the autumn of 1851.

After passing the point alluded to, the road had the creek on one side, and a wide tract of deserted workings on the other, stretching away for miles down the valley. After another mile it again became a street of tents, stores, and shops, behind which were chaotic heaps of gravel and clay turned up by the diggers.

A stream of busy life was passing up and down the streets of Sandhurst—for such the township is called—as we drove through. There were parties of newly-arrived diggers, with their high-piled carts; travellers deep in immense thigh-boots, and in some dwarfish cases looking as if there was a probability of their sinking out of sight in them, and either mounted on travel-soiled horses or moving about on foot; carts of “washing-stuff” going to the creek to have the color—that is to say, the gold—washed out; huge drays of merchandise, drawn by long teams of jaded bullocks, just in from a three or four weeks’ journey from Melbourne; and diggers, with pick and shovel on shoulder, trudging homeward after the day’s work.

For the next three miles the road extended through almost continuous lines of stores and shops, while the diggers’ tents were to be seen perched on the slopes of the hills, or in the lateral gullies. The valley bottom was still covered with gravel, and burrowed by countless pits and tunnels, through which the creek had carved out a channel. On after examination, however, we found that a drive up the principal valley gave a very inadequate idea of the magnificent scale of the golden deposits at Bendigo, and of the prodigious amount of human labor spent in developing them.

I found, on ascending any commanding eminence, that not only had the entire bottom or floor of the main valley been turned up, but that every intersecting gully, extending into the ranges right and left, had also been wrought, and that it sent down its tributary yellow stream to meet the great river of diggings that filled the breadth of the main valley.

The main valley, however, was only a part of this great gold-field. North of the creek there ran a parallel series of seven large tributary gullies, some with workings two or three miles in extent. South of the principal valley two lateral gullies de-

bouching on the main stream, and running up into the ranges till they met, presented a continuous chain of miners four miles long. Altogether the Bendigo district must at this time have included nearly a hundred gullies and flats, extending over an area about ten miles in length by half as much in breadth.

We were driving along a road skirting the main valley, when two men, having the appearance of squatters, with cabbage-tree hats, knee boots and riding whips, came lounging along, one of whom I noticed eyed us closely for a moment, and suddenly looked away.

"By Jove," exclaimed Reginald Wade, "that's one of the men who stuck us up in the Black Forest."

"So it is—you're right," said I, recognizing him at the same instant.

"Here, take the reins," and in a moment Mr. Wade had jumped out of the dog-cart and was in hot pursuit of the bushranger who, separating from his companion, took to his heels simultaneously with this sudden action. The bushranger made a bee line for a group of tents about a quarter of a mile off, while the cry of "stop thief," from his pursuer, caused a crowd of diggers to join in the hunt. The race was becoming exciting when the bushranger suddenly turned upon a man who was trying to head him off, and drawing his revolver from his belt, shot him dead. All but one of those in pursuit fell back at this unexpected diversion. This one, however, rushed boldly forward, pistol in hand, and was shot dead in like manner.

Then the bushranger took to his heels more desperately than before, and the number of his pursuers increased. Men were now running from the direction of the tents, and instead of making for these, the bushranger tried to clear them and outrun his pursuers till he reached the bush. Shots were fired after him several times, but without effect. He was running among the working claims, and every few seconds he had to jump to overcome some obstacle. Those in pursuit from all directions were rapidly gaining upon him. Another jump and he disappeared!

The crowd rushed up and found that he had fallen into a hole forty feet deep.

I had followed as well as the dog-cart would allow me in the distance, and now, tying the horses to a stump, I ran to the spot where the breathless crowd had gathered.

CHAPTER XLI.

REGINALD WADE STANDS AGHAST.

One of the diggers present volunteered to descend in search of the missing man, and he did so. Great was the suspense with which his return was awaited, and meanwhile the crowd increased by hundreds. When he reappeared, he exclaimed, "He's there, looking as dead as mutton, but may be he's alive yet. I've tied the bucket rope round his chest, and we'll haul him up."

So three or four men went to work to draw him out of the hole, and up he came, with the pallor of death on his face and blood trickling from his mouth and ears, while his eyes were fixed and stony. Twice the lips moved slightly, after he was laid on the ground, and then the breath seemed to forsake the body, for the man lay evidently dead before us.

"What did he do?" asked one of the diggers who had hoisted him out of the hole.

"He and another stuck us up in the Black Forest," I replied.

"Bushranger—eh? Serves him right, then."

The crowd began to search the dead man's pockets, and very soon everything found upon his person was undergoing examination, and being surreptitiously appropriated.

"That's a pretty picture," said one, looking at a small daguerreotype which had been taken from the breast-pocket of his coat.

Reginald Wade leant over the heads of others and looked at it, and so did I. It was the portrait of a handsome woman of about fifty years.

As his eye caught it I saw him start, and he exclaimed, "My God!" as if he had received a shock of surprise.

"Let me see that, please," he said, excitedly, and almost in a tone of command, to the man who held it, and when it was handed to him, he looked at it with a wild look of astonishment, such as I had never before observed in his countenance.

"Do you know who that is?" said he, turning to me, and holding the portrait before my eyes.

"No—who?"

"My Mother!"

"Your mother?" I ejaculated in nearly equal astonishment. "How came it there, then?"

"I think I know how. You've heard me speak of my brother, who went to the bad—haven't you? This portrait belonged to him. Look, there are his initials on the back of the case, in his own handwriting—I remember it well."

"Here, let me see those papers!" he cried, turning to the crowd, and he gathered several that were passing from hand to hand, and eagerly glanced at them.

"This proves it," said he, opening a well-worn sheet of note-paper. "Here's a letter in my dear mother's handwriting to Bob himself."

He moved close to the side of the apparently dead man, and looked him full in the face for more than a minute. Then he said with great emotion, "My dear fellow, that's Bob. Although I haven't seen him since I was a boy, and he was a man then, it all comes back upon me. He has changed greatly, but I recognize the features through all that heavy beard and tan. My poor father will be distressed to hear of this. He always said he was afraid Bob would come to the gallows. For ten years before I left home we had heard nothing of him, and gave him up for lost, thinking he was dead, and now the mystery is solved. Yes, there he lies," and we both looked into the weather-beaten face, upturned to heaven in death.

"How came he to lead such a life?" I asked.

"Oh," replied Reginald, deeply touched, "there was no doing anything with him. He ran away to sea when a school-boy. The next thing we heard of him, years afterwards, was that he and others had mutinied, and tried to scuttle their

ship, and they were brought home in irons, tried and convicted. He was transported for that, but after his term had expired he returned to England. It was then I saw him last. My father tried to give him a fresh start in life, but he would buckle down to nothing. He was a born ne'er-do-well. He left England suddenly, without saying a word to any one, and from that day to this we heard nothing of him. That is nearly fifteen years ago now, for I was a boy of about twelve at the time."

We had stepped aside during this conversation, so that it might not be heard by the crowd.

"I'll take possession of these papers and anything else I can find, and see that his body is properly buried," he continued, "and that is all I can do now. How sorry I am that I met him! As it is I feel that I am little better than his murderer. Let us carry him over yonder to where the tents are, and find a place to lay him in."

We lifted the body and carried it slowly through the bright afternoon sunlight to the nearest tent, and made arrangements for having it kept there all night. I undertook the melancholy task of ordering a coffin and arranging for a funeral on the next day, and meanwhile we shared a tent with some gentlemanly diggers in the immediate vicinity, and entrusted our horses to a stable keeper not far off.

During the evening I heard much of gold digging and the diggers from those with whom we were temporarily domiciled, but Reginald lay down for the night early, and took no part in the conversation. He was thinking over this strange discovery of his brother in the person of the bushranger, a subject that naturally grieved him greatly.

The life of the digger is simple, regular, and tolerably healthy. His dress is a blue elastic vest, or jersey, the same as worn by sailors, with the addition, during winter, of an outer coarse serge shirt. His waist is girt with a plain leather belt, in which he usually carries his fossicking-knife, for dislodging the gold from holes and crevices. If his work necessitate his standing in water, he wears a pair of water-tight knee-boots, drawn up outside the trousers. He usually rises at daybreak, and he and his mates—one, two, three, or four, as the case

may be—first prepare and dispatch their breakfast, and then sally out to their “claim” or “hole.” If the latter be far removed from the tent, they invariably take with them their dinner, and the tin pot for making tea. At sundown they return, bringing the proceeds of the day’s work in a small bag, or an old match-box. Supper is then prepared, which, alike with the other meals, consists of beef or mutton, with bread and tea. The gold having first been carefully washed, is now divided, or added to the general store, which is often kept in old pickle-bottles, or a collection of castaways of the kind.

The digger is very free and independent; he works hard, but he does so of his own will, and in the hope of acquiring sufficient gain to enable him to choose an occupation more congenial to his taste, if not entire independence. He is generous, and as unsuspicious as he is frank. He respects Sunday by an entire absence from work, holding it as a day of rest and relaxation, although not commonly participating in its religious observances, but preferring to gossip with his neighbors, and travel from tent to tent, visiting his acquaintances.

We rose on the following morning soon after daylight. The melancholy task of burying the dead man—my own cousin as it appeared—was performed at noon in the Bendigo burial ground—a quiet spot on a hill-side,—a Methodist minister, whose presence I had secured, reading the service over the body as it was committed, ashes to ashes and dust to dust, to the grave. Reginald Wade and myself were the sole mourners.

There were no tombstones to mark the last resting places of the departed—nothing but mounds of earth here and there. The living, except in rare instances and where close relationship existed, were too much absorbed in the search for gold to care for the dead. I saw Reginald drop a tear over his brother’s grave as he turned away and followed the clergyman from the spot.

Here lay the rude graves of those whose cherished hopes had been blighted by the mysterious hand of the great enemy. The deserted workings on the hill-top and the busy scene below alike contrasted with these silent homes of the dead. Everything reminded me of life and enterprise

as I glanced down the valley and across to the surrounding hills, and everywhere observed the evidences of man's indomitable industry, but near me all that met the eye spoke only of death.

The humble mound and rudely constructed cross told their eloquent tale, while on one of the graves a few of the wild flowers of the bush, evidently strewn there a day or two before, bore silent testimony clear to all understandings.

The bright rays of the sun were playing on a solitary headboard that may have marked the resting place of a once strong man, whom the abuse of liquor, the wasting fever, or some of the other ills to which flesh is heir, had cut off in the midst of his exciting career. Beside that solitary headboard was a mound that perhaps indicated the grave of the young wife who had followed her husband away from the refinements of civilization to share in the hardships of colonial life, which, alas! proved too much for her tender frame. And there was another mound, which perchance covered one who, scarcely beyond the years of boyhood, left home and friends to seek his fortune in the land of gold. He too fell under the hardships and dissipations of life on the gold fields. His friends may have never heard of his death, and weary months or years may have passed, and the mother's heart grown sad and the father's brow darkened while they still hoped against hope.

Retracing my steps into the valley in company with Mr. Wade, the busy signs of active life which met the eye and ear dispelled the somewhat melancholy train of thought in which I had become involved as we walked together in silence. Reginald was the first to break it.

"Washington," said he, "I have one request to make of you, and that is that you will bury everything you know in connection with my dead brother in his grave. You know what I mean—never speak of him again. This event has given me great pain, and I'm very sorry I made the discovery I did, for my brother has disgraced his family, and by his own misconduct unconsciously led me to be indirectly the cause of his death. Let, then, the past so far as he is concerned be buried. I shall never speak to you of him again, and, as I doubt whether I shall even let my father know what has trans-

pired, I ask you to keep the whole melancholy story strictly to yourself."

I replied, in the language of the marriage service, "I will."

CHAPTER XLII.

YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE.

After breakfast on the following morning, I persuaded Reginald Wade to leave Bendigo, as I saw he was brooding over the tragedy of his brother's death, and change of scene was likely to do him good by diverting his mind. Accordingly we left Sandhurst and our dog-cart behind, and soon found ourselves on horseback in the bush.

On every side was seen as we went a labyrinth of gum-trees, with silvery and mottled trunks and feathery foliage, which offered no shade from the vivid and fiery sun-light. Here and there gnarled old giants of the forest, with twisted trunks and branches, stood up in grotesque shapes over dead trees and branches that lay half-hidden in the high grass, and among lofty stems half-burnt away by bush-fires, whose foliage was still green and luxuriant. The clustering emerald of the cherry-tree, and the she-oak everywhere contrasted with the meagre and more sombre foliage of the gum. Occasionally we came upon a beautiful grassy glade, with here and there a stream, while glimpses of the purple-tinted outlines of mountains, indistinct in the distance, rose upon the view, ever changing as we went; while for music we had the clear ting-ting of the bell-bird, the shrill hooting of the cockatoo and parrot, and the trill-trill of many a gaudy-plumaged tenant of the woods.

The principal incident of the day was our visiting a native mi-mi, or encampment, the huts of which were built of loose branches and the bark of the gum-tree. The aborigines here bore lamentable evidence of their proximity to, and associa-

tion with, the white man. The men of the party were either lying down in their huts, or squatting in the shade of the same. The women, or lubras, rose and eyed us wistfully. Some had scraps of ragged cloth about them, evidently not of native manufacture, and which very much tended to spoil their picturesqueness, and to mar what little beauty they possessed. The hair of all was extremely black and coarse, and in some cases tied up with strips of handkerchiefs, and such like. They had each holes in either the cartilage of the nose or ears, or both, through which apertures was thrust some ornament of their choice, usually the bone of a bird, beast, or fish. At intervals they chanted in low murmuring tones a peculiar native melody, meanwhile beating their stretched opossum-skin rugs as a drum accompaniment.

After this we rode in the direction of the Pyrenees, as far as the station of Sandy Sutherland—a Scotchman, notorious for his possession of bag-pipes, and still more so for being addicted to playing them—to which we had been directed.

It is not necessary to be invited in order to insure a welcome in the bush; the solitary denizens of the leafy wilderness are too glad to see the face of a visitor not to entertain him with all the resources of their homestead, and to the best of their ability.

We found the squatter, with a solitary guest, in a wretched slab hut that constituted his dwelling-place. He looked as wild as he was hairy, but nevertheless made us very welcome. After regaling us with tea, cold mutton, and stale bread, his usual fare, unembellished with even milk or butter, for his was a sheep-station, he volunteered to give us a tune, and accordingly out came the bag-pipes, and away he went reeling about the room, amid the most vociferous screeching and contortion of the instrument, and with a highly ludicrous wagging of the head and flinging of the legs on his part. The effect was prodigious, and elicited much glee, but as it is sometimes possible to have too much of a good thing, we were glad when the performance terminated.

Our entertainer's hut, which of course was single-storied, consisted of three small rooms. The floor was of mud, daubed in some places with plaster, and the walls of wattle-tree slabs

and "dab"—a kind of hurdle-work, roughly covered with a coat of mud. The roof was of bark, while of ceiling there was an entire absence. Partitions rose up to the height of six feet, so that all being open above, what was spoken in one apartment could be distinctly heard in the others.

In the division first entered was a huge recess, where burned a log fire, the smoke of which ascended through a wooden chimney. A rifle was slung against the wall, as also a collection of the bushy tails of the dingo, or native dog. A few greasy and dilapidated volumes lay on the bench-like shelf, in one corner, and on both sides of the fire-place was a wooden seat, which when needed answered the purpose of a bedstead. There was a small window in which dirty white calico was made to serve instead of glass. In each of the other two compartments, which were used as bed-rooms, there was a stretcher—every body who has been in Australia is more or less familiar with the so-denominated cross-legged, canvas-bottomed, postless, curtainless, unadorned resting-places for the weary sleeper. In addition to the stretcher there was a tin pot and a tin basin, near and above which, hanging from a rusty nail, was a towel stiff with dirt, while still higher an old worn out tooth-brush and a dirty comb were stuck under the bark roof. There were no drawers, cupboards, or shelves, so this sticking under the roof was a pardonable invention of Mother Necessity.

Reginald Wade and myself had the wooden couches in the first compartment placed at our disposal, and blankets were added as covering for ourselves and timber. Our host and the other guest occupied the two stretchers. The fire continued smouldering during the night. The door was secured only by a rude latch, and one step across the threshold would have brought us into the wild bush, with the heavenly host in their silence and their beauty shining placidly above.

I was kept awake for hours by the eccentricities of a menagerie of household pets, one of which, a domesticated lamb, kept running in and out of the hut, through a gap in the doorway. It would vary its performances by alternately scraping and pawing; poking its nose into my face, frisking about as if under the influence of strong excitement, and starting off with a rush, as if suddenly taken by surprise. During all this time,

cats engaged in flirtation were capering wildly about the joists and roof, geese were making serious attempts at conversation, and roosting poultry were scratching and murmuring within hearing outside; and at the first break of dawn the clarion-note was sounded from some red-wattled throat, which was the signal for a general chorus from all parts of the homestead; while the cheerful yet ludicrous notes of the laughing jackass, and the song of the blackbird, broke melodiously on the ear from out the neighboring groves.

I was awake and up before any of the others, and wandered in search of soap and water into the division occupied by my host, whom I found fast asleep, with his mouth disclosing a yawning abyss. I felt justified in using his tin basin to wash in, there being no other in the hut, and proceeded to act accordingly, upon which he awoke, yawned, and began his daily work by "turning out," or, in other words, getting up. "You'll excuse me for making use of your wash-hand basin," I observed, and was about to throw away the water I had used, when he cried, "Stop!" and taking the basin out of my hand, threw its liquid contents across the mud floor. As he had slept in his blue day-shirt, and appeared to entertain a horror of a too general application of cold water, he was soon dressed, immediately after which he went to look after his sheep, that had been folded near the hut during the night.

Breakfast followed soon afterwards in the style of the previous night's supper.

We had just finished the meal when suddenly up rode at a gallop, six rough looking and heavily bearded mounted men, well armed with horse-pistols and revolvers. These, although they were without disguise and wore ordinary cabbage tree hats and thigh boots, were at once recognized by the squatter and his friend as bushrangers, their leader being "Black Prince"—so called from his dark complexion—a well known member of the gang. They all drew up in front of the hut.

Three of their number dismounted, two of whom entered the hut, while one stood guarding the door. Each man held his revolver in his hand.

"All that we want is money," said Black Prince. "Deliver up what you've got without a word."

Not a man offered any resistance.

"This is all I've got," said the squatter, throwing down a chamois leather bag with about twenty sovereigns in it.

"How much have you?" asked the desperado, turning to the squatter's guest, who had arrived before us. The latter looked, I could see, greatly chagrined, and in this respect he presented a strong contrast to the apparent indifference of the squatter, who seemed to take the proceeding pretty much as a matter of course.

The guest drew from his pockets two canvas bags full of coin, and laid them on the table.

"Come, come, take off that belt," said the bushranger, and the man seeing that he had no alternative but to do so or be shot, divested himself of a belt which he wore buckled round his body under his waistcoat, and handed it over in the same manner. It was heavily filled with gold dust.

"Out with the rest," commanded the haughty scoundrel, "you had more than that when you left Sandhurst."

Two bags of nuggets were produced from his coat-pockets.

"Any more?"

"No."

"Search him," said the bushranger turning to his mate, and he was searched accordingly, but nothing more in the way of gold was found upon his person.

"Now you, sir!" said the captain of the bushrangers, addressing me. "Let me see what you've got, and you, too," he continued, turning to Reginald Wade.

Deeming prudence, on this occasion, the better part of valor, we complied without a word of protest. I had only about fifteen pounds in money, and Mr. Wade had something more. Both, however, had certificates of deposit issued by the Bank of New South Wales, in Melbourne. There we had deposited our surplus cash before starting for the diggings, but these we said nothing about, and although the bushrangers opened and looked at them during the search, they handed them back, probably deeming they would incur too much risk for their own safety in getting them cashed, as they were made payable to our own order.

"Gentlemen," said the leader of the gang, after all had been

searched and the interior of the hut had been carefully examined also, "you've behaved handsomely, and as I know what it is to be without money, I'll leave you a couple of sovereigns a piece. Good morning."

The three men instantly remounted their horses, which were being held for them by the other three who had remained mounted, and galloped off into the bush.

"They evidently came after you, Jones," said the squatter to the guest who had delivered up so much gold.

"I knew they were about," said he, with a bitter curse, "and was afraid this very thing would happen. I oughtn't to have carried so much about me at once."

The coolness with which the robbery was committed and the equanimity with which it was borne, surprised me. There was no violence, no commotion on either side. The bushrangers knew they were masters of the situation and their victims knew it also, and surrendered unconditionally.

We left the squatter and his guest smoking their pipes, while they talked over the event of the morning. They told us at parting that we incurred no danger from bushrangers so long as we offered no resistance and quietly allowed ourselves to be searched, but, as "old chums," they warned us against any other course.

"A man's life is worth more to him than his money, you know," said the squatter philosophically, "and the best of us die soon enough without having bushrangers' bullets to help us to shuffle off this mortal coil."

CHAPTER XLIII.

WHAT BEFELL US.

"I don't want to utter any reproaches, Reginald," I said, as we walked our horses away from Sandy Sutherland's hut, "but I'm almost sorry that I undertook this journey. It was running too much risk for a man in my peculiar position, and I

don't enjoy it half as much as I should if I were differently situated. My thoughts dwell upon Gertrude Morgan, my mother, and this strange romantic history of mine, and my greatest desire is to get back to New York as quickly as possible. The only thing that reconciles me to this trip is the fact that no vessel that we could go by, will sail until after we have had time to reach Melbourne again. But who knows what may happen with these devils of bushrangers about? Already I've had a narrow escape of losing my life by one of them, and I wouldn't run another such risk for anything. Besides, who wants to lose his money in the way we've just lost ours?"

"Oh, we'll reach Melbourne again all right and in good time," replied Reginald. "Don't be down in the mouth because you've been relieved of your loose change. I'll make it good to you. I'm almost as much interested in your affairs as you are yourself, and I'm sure I wouldn't have advised you to do any thing that would interfere with your plans or happiness. You'll be back in New York just as soon as if you had waited quietly in Melbourne until you found a vessel ready to take you. We are old bushmen, you must remember, and can make ourselves as much at home here as anywhere else."

"I know all that," I rejoined, "but I would not for the world do any thing deliberately that would jeopardize my return to America without unnecessary delay, and I'm surprised when I reflect upon it, at my rashness in firing at the bushranger in the Black Forest, but even then I wouldn't have done it only for your leading off. I saw that I had either to shoot or be shot. Mind, if I were a free man I should not shrink for a moment from danger, but rather court than shun it, for I have a natural taste for adventure. I have a duty, however, to perform to others, and the fresh experience we have passed through this morning, admonishes me in a manner calculated to give rise to these reflections. Don't you think so?"

"Oh, yes, I understand—it's very natural you should feel so under the circumstances, Washington, but I believe in being jolly come what may. You'll enjoy your return to city life all the more for breathing this glorious air and getting your eye teeth cut by bushrangers. Come, let us consign the robbers to perdition and have a good gallop. We'll get to the

station our friend the squatter directed us to, in next to no time, and the more bushrangers we meet, the merrier, say I. There's one consolation for us now—we've nothing to lose."

We set out for a point of the Pyrenees distant about ten miles, and halted at a homestead near the place of our destination. Here we remained for an hour, and later, on horseback, struck into a wood-splitter's track, and followed it up the mountain-pass. We ascended for some distance a gentle rise through gum forest and scrub, and then had the toilsome pleasure of doing the same thing up a very steep and rocky gully. As we neared the summit of the chain, lofty precipices of white quartz rock, deeply and vertically furrowed, were presented to the eye, surrounded and half-concealed by dense forest, which in some places extended to the uppermost peaks.

At the crest of the gully, a magnificent prospect of mountain-tops, umbrageous woods, and rugged defiles, extending to the sea-like plain beneath, and blending with the clear blue of the sky on the horizon, burst upon the view. Bold in outline, and as picturesque as the day was bright, this scene was such as would have refreshed and delighted the eye of a painter, and inspired the mind of a poet with ideas of the grand, the magnificent, and the beautiful. And its effect was not lost upon us, for we surveyed with happy feeling every feature of the rugged picture, and lingered long in admiration of its beauties. Another short ascent through stringy-bark forest led to the highest point of the pass.

The track, white as snow, owing to the quartz sand which covered it, wound through a rich green undergrowth. We descended by a gentle slope, and very soon came to a spring. Granite cropped out here and there, near the head of the pass forming apparently the axis of the chain. We descended about seven miles on the opposite side, and as far as the homestead of the Merri-Merri station, where we arrived much jaded, and put up for the night. Early on the following morning we were again in the saddle, and directed our horses' heads towards the summit of a slaty range, that here pointed down in a southerly direction, and lost itself in the great lava plain below. Advancing five or six miles, we came to a chain of hills, crested by huge granite rocks, grown over with

lichens, and as grotesque in form—globose, conical, and shapeless—as they were irregular in disposition. Two miles further on, another granite hill rose out of the plain.

To the north-west extended the jagged chain of the taller mountains, blue and smoke-like at their summits, yet clearly pencilled to the view. Descending the ranges, we traversed a wide stretch of undulating country, and monotonous lava plain, thickly furrowed, and void of every blade of grass that had sprung up there during the winter. The smoke of a bush-fire was now seen, but it was drifting before the wind in a contrary direction to us.

Ten miles further on we came to a station or homestead, nestled in a hollow, near a fine broad and deep pond or water-hole, skirted with gnarled gum-trees on one side, and a well-cultivated garden on the other, which, green and luxuriant, contrasted delightfully with the arid, dreary plain that surrounded them, and formed a very oasis in the seeming desert. The homestead here was a well-built brick and wooden house, and comfortably if not elegantly furnished. We were invited to join the family at dinner, which we did to our perfect satisfaction. Our appearance acted as quite a sufficient introduction to the good opinion and hospitalities of the denizens of the bush.

Soon after dinner we were again in the saddle, and set out to the south-east, straight across the plain towards a bald hill, which shut out the view of a lofty mountain. It was a wild and dreary country we were now treading, broken and furrowed with hollows, which in winter had formed swamps, and as we advanced it became sterile and rocky. The sun went down grandly in the west, the brief twilight rapidly waned, and our horses were exhausted; but no station or hut was to be seen, nothing but the drear, bleak plain met our lengthy gaze. By-and-by we came upon a track, and followed it awhile, after which we left it, and again pursued our course. A thin crescent moon shone calmly in the heavens. We still wandered on, leading our jaded horses, stumbling as we went over the rocks that on all sides peeped above the surface. At length we were fairly lost in these rugged, wildering wilds. It seemed hopeless to continue roaming onward through the

darkness which had shrouded the landscape, without a clue to guide us on our way, and accordingly we halted. Notwithstanding the extreme heat of the day, the wind now blew cold and sharp; that, however, did not do away with thirst, or the necessity for water, but of water we had none. The cold wind made us feel hungry, but of food we had only a fragment of an old "damper" (an unleavened cake made of flour and water, and baked in ashes); this we ate, and having succeeded in making a fire, and a breakwind of boughs, we wrapped ourselves in our opossum-rugs, and lay down on the ground near by, and very soon were asleep, with nothing between us and the star-spangled canopy of heaven. The night sped on in solitary flight.

Then came the first gray streak of dawn. I awoke, and, starting up, found that our horses were nowhere to be seen. They had broken from their moorings, as a sailor would have said; certain it was they had slipped from their tether, but that is a common circumstance in the bush, and one that does not cause the heroes of a night's bivouac much alarm, for they are usually to be found grazing a mile or two off. The cheerless morning light disclosed to the eye a solitary moorland, with valley-like undulations, intersected here and there by rugged and rocky ridges. A few stunted shrubs and deformed banksias consorted well with the craggy nooks out of which they grew. We were without either track or clue to guide us to a station; no living thing was here to be seen, and we had neither food nor water. Parched and hungry, therefore, we set out together to seek the strayed horses. After walking about two miles, we came upon a flock of sheep and a shepherd's hut. The dogs quickly espied us, and barked the alarm signal; upon which their master, the shepherd, came out in his night garb to see what all the noise was occasioned by. We asked him for a drink of cold water, which we received and drank with no ordinary pleasure and satisfaction. He told us that we were only a mile from the nearest station; so we made towards it, and on our way found our horses quietly grazing together in a grassy valley. We found some difficulty in securing them; but when that end was achieved, we led them back to our place of bivouac, where we saddled them, and

afterwards rode over to the station indicated. The sun now rose in vivifying grandeur, rolling floods of light over the more prominent objects of the landscape, and dispelling the mists that had hung over the eastern horizon. Beautiful and exhilarating was the effect of the rainbow hues that shot athwart the prospect, gladdening to the heart, and resplendent to the eye. Grand, divine loveliness. The rising of the sun is more cheering, even as his setting is more grand, more inspiring in its pensive glory; but how beautiful are both, and what is there in the majesty of the elements that can outvie their splendor!

We found the squatter at the station in his hut, and in bed. However, he bade us welcome, rose, and putting a handful of the coarse green tea in common use throughout the bush, into the large tin pot, prepared for breakfast. Our adventure was soon told, and, as it was devoid of novelty, just as quickly dismissed. After breakfast, we again mounted our horses, and cantered away to the northward, across the sun-lit plain, and into the forest. At first, a few reeds and ferns bordered our path, but these soon disappeared, and we found ourselves in the midst of charred and fallen trunks—striking evidences of the recent ravages of bush-fires. Of all the rich and characteristic vegetation that formed the undergrowth of the forest, two or three weeks before, not a trace now remained save in the burnt stems or fronds of the fern-tree; but even these, instead of branching out like feathery palms, hung down forlornly from the tops of the trunks. Every green shrub had been devoured by the flames; on all sides were trees of colossal dimensions, and presenting smooth branchless trunks for a hundred feet or more from the ground; the trunks were charred, but their foliated tops had escaped the fiery element, and were still green and luxuriant—offering a singular contrast to the signs of death and desolation beneath.

The track we had followed, which at first was clearly defined and easy, became indistinct, and then gradually effaced as we advanced. To continue to follow it was beyond our power, for it often lay beneath a chaos of huge fallen trunks and branches, and often it became necessary to make a long detour in order to avoid these; which, two or three hundred feet in length,

would here and there arch over a ravine and leave a passage beneath. These obstacles having been rounded, we had again to seek the old track as a clue through the forest; and afterwards to discover a spot where, by means of leaping, climbing, and scrambling, the horses might force a passage; so great was the labyrinth.

What most attracted attention, and interested me, while passing through these tangled ruins of vegetation, was the magnificent growth and size of the trees. Even the lightwood-tree grew to the height of a hundred feet.

Neither the voice of a bird, nor the chirp of an insect, sounded through these all but lifeless solitudes; every living thing appeared to have perished in the wide-spread conflagration. The wind whistled mournfully through the leafy crowns of the standing trees, while occasionally the distant crash of a falling trunk, deep and loud—the avalanche of the forest—broke the silence of this singular scene of desolation.

We were in the midst of this scene, when suddenly three mounted men rode up to us, one of whom cried, "Halt—Dismount," and in a moment the bridles of our horses were seized and three revolvers were levelled at our heads. We dismounted.

Again we were in the hands of bushrangers. But for the serious character of these adventures I should have been amused at their frequency. As it was, we seemed fated to be "stuck up."

I saw at a glance that these men were part of the gang of six by whom we had been relieved of our cash at the squatter's on the previous day, and I began to think it was too much of a joke even for bushrangers, this "sticking up" of the same men twice within two days. Surely, I reflected, the desperadoes had made a mistake. I looked for the swarthy face and brilliant eyes of "Black Prince," but they were missing.

I thought it better to be cautious than rash in what I said, and therefore merely remarked, "We've only a couple of sovereigns apiece. Didn't we meet you yesterday?"

Meanwhile, two of the desperadoes had dismounted, and while one was searching me, another was similarly occupied with Reginald Wade.

I recognized in the men before me the three bushrangers who had remained mounted in front of Squatter Sutherland's hut, while their three companions committed the robbery.

"Where, yesterday?" asked the man who was searching me.

"At Mr. Sutherland's station," I replied.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed out the villain. "You don't mean to say you were the fellows we met there."

"Yes, I do," I replied.

"Do you hear that, mates?" he said, turning to his companions. "We've struck a blank this time. We overhauled our friends yesterday at Mr. Sandy Sutherland's," and he laughed immoderately, as if he thought it a very good joke indeed. The other men laughed too, but more to hide their disappointment than anything else, apparently.

"Excuse us," said the man who had searched me, putting back the couple of sovereigns he had found on my person. "We never take small amounts, but we sometimes give them," and he winked at me knowingly, as if we had been intimate friends of long standing.

"Consider this all a mistake," I heard the other bushranger say to Reginald. "We never fire at dead game when we know it, but accidents will happen in the best regulated families."

The two men remounted, and, with a wave of the hand, the three galloped out of sight almost in an instant.

Onward we toiled, and at length reached a streamlet flowing through a channel of soft mud. Had the thirsty horses been allowed to drink, they would have been hopelessly bogged; but drink they wanted, and drink I was determined to let them have if by any means I could possibly accomplish the service. Accordingly I crept down to the water-side, took off my hat, filled it from the running brook, and retracing my steps, succeeded in affording the necessary relief.

After an hour's ride from this point of our day's journey, the forest, instead of being burnt up, merely showed signs of singeing; and very soon we passed the limits of devastation, and entered a green alley, cut through the undergrowth, and walled in with the most luxuriant vegetation. The effect of

the transition from the bare lifeless forest to this exuberance of vegetable life, was at once pleasing and refreshing. Never before did moss and lichen appear so exquisitely perfect in form and tint. The fern-tree extended its green and feathery fronds, and contrasted with the darker shades of the forest beyond. Delicate tendrils climbed up into the trees, and hung from branch to branch. The liquid ting of the bell-bird, the chirrup and flutter of paroquets, and the shout of the laughing jackass, now resounded on every side; and as we trotted along, our jaded steeds freshened up, and caught at reeds and ferns, and no doubt welcomed the prospect of grass.

After riding for about four miles through these beautiful groves and shrubberies, in which huge gum and stringy bark-trees towered three hundred feet above our heads, we emerged into an open valley. The latter we traversed, and then followed a long sharp ridge which led to another deep delving valley. Into this we descended on foot, the horses sliding rather than walking down its crumbling sides as we led them after us.

In the deep solitudes of this rugged vale we found a picturesque streamlet, gurgling as it went, and in some places over-arched by fallen trees. After this we crossed a steep range, and found another such brook beyond it; and again, another range and another brook. Here, overtaken by night, we were compelled to camp; for to make our way through the bush was impossible, in the darkness. We kindled a fire, and enveloping ourselves in our rugs, lay down beside it; and hungry and supperless, sank once more to slumber.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A GRAND CORROBERRI.

We had been camped just sufficiently long to allow of about two hours' sleep, when I dreamt myself in Phantom-land, and suddenly awoke to find that we were surrounded by a dusky group of wild men, hooting loudly, as they seemingly danced

round the red embers of our fire. I rose, with something like a start. Was it a vision, or a dream, or reality?

For the moment, the transition from profound sleep to my waking senses rendered me incapable of deciding, so strange was the bewilderment. But it was only for a moment, and then I clearly appreciated my position, and saw that we had been merely disturbed by natives.

The moon shone brightly down from her silver throne, and lighted up the landscape far and near with her placid beams, and made the dark and moving figures before me stand out with wonderful distinctness. My companion had been aroused by the cries of the aborigines almost at the same moment as myself, and we both sprang to our feet together. There was much noise and gesticulation, much brandishing of spears, and jumping to-and-fro on the part of our midnight visitors. What was to be done? What did they want? Such were the hurried inquiries of Mr. Wade. I calmed his troubled soul by a few word of assurance and consolation. He wished himself back at Melbourne.

I uttered a scrap of the native tongue I had picked up elsewhere. Those before me evidently failed in comprehending my meaning, or even in recognizing the sounds. Feeling it rather awkward to continue standing, without bringing about some interchange of ideas, and being, moreover, desirous of making their more familiar acquaintance, I commenced a species of active pantomime, such as pointing to the fire, and then to themselves, with a view of ascertaining where theirs lay, as the aborigines always keep their fires burning during the night. The result was that friendly relations were at once established, and that we saddled our horses and set out together for their mi-mi. The light of the moon, which, at the time of our camping had not risen, was now sufficient to guide us, even had we been alone; but with the natives leading the way for us, we experienced little difficulty in getting over the ground.

We had not proceeded far, when an opening in the forest disclosed the gleam of fires. The antics of our guides told us that there lay their encampment. I was ripe for adventure, and this lapse into the realms of aboriginalism was rather

gladdening, and pleasant excitement, to my brain than otherwise; and I hailed the novelty with delight. We reached the mi-mi. Fires were gleaming here and there, to the number of twenty, within a circuit of a hundred yards, and round these fires were squatted the dark forms of men and women, unclad, save with the loose folds of an opossum rug, and unadorned save with a fish or other bone thrust through the cartilage of the nose, or the pendulums of the ears, and with wilgie and with paint. But the application of the latter was the most conspicuous feature about them; some were distinguished by white longitudinal lines drawn down the legs and arms, with lateral lines of similar color drawn parallel with their ribs, and otherwise chalked off so as to resemble skeletons, such being the effect sought. Others, again, were colored after the rainbow pattern, and upon these the whole resources of the earths at their command had been called into requisition. The effect of the red flare of the fires upon these grotesque figures was very singular and wild. Wilgie is simply the fat of animals, with which their hair and part of the body were anointed.

The entire group rose up with a many-tongued utterance as they caught sight of us, and there was great sensation at once evident among their number. They gathered round us with spear and boomerang; and while they eyed us scrutinizingly, they kept up an incessant conversation with those of their party who had disturbed and led us thither, in which, no doubt, they asked for full particulars of their meeting with us, where we were found, and what we were doing, as well as deliberated upon what it would be best to do with us. The novelty of the scene was striking. Here we were among the wild children of nature, in the wild bush, at midnight.

Judging that the performance of a corrobberri would conduce to the general hilarity, and drive away suspicion from the minds of the natives as to our disposition towards them, I suggested such without loss of time by dancing a hornpipe. The suggestion was received with uproarious manifestations of delight, and the dusky throng began their revels with ringing shouts like laughter, and with much leaping and agitation of body.

I feel that language is inadequate to portray the scene that

followed, and that any description I may pen will but coldly, faintly, picture to the mind of the reader the vivid and energetic display of passion and animation that was presented by those aboriginal performers of this night corrobberri of the Australian wilderness. Nevertheless, I shall draw the outline.

The women of the tribe retired together into the shades of the neighboring grove, and quickly reappeared, and ranged themselves in lines on either side of the fires. Suddenly, and with a shout—half-yell, half-song—they commenced dancing; the singing being meanwhile sustained with vigor, and the motions of limb with great energy. A patriarchal group sat near us, beating time on stretched skins; the rest of the men had retired into the sombre shades of the forest, and were unseen. The gesticulations and dance of the women grew more violent and rapid as the moments fled, and the performance seemed a perfect whirl, accompanied by a deafening and exciting chorus. Quickly they vanished with a yell, but the music was still heard. Just then the men, like spectres, emerged from the darkness, and came forward into the obscure light shed by the yet uncherished fires, and joined in chorus with the women. As the strange figures of the men—with their bodies painted gaudily with red, blue, white, and yellow clay, and in such varied ways that no two individuals were alike—came forward in mystic order from the obscurity of the background, while the singers and beaters of time were invisible, the effect was highly theatrical.

The dance was now progressive, the first movement being slow, and introduced by two performers; the others, men and women, one by one, joining in, and each imperceptibly warming into savage attitudes and almost frenzical excitement. The legs were stretched to the utmost, the head was turned over one shoulder, the eyes glared, and were fixed with the fiercest energy all in one direction; and the arms were raised, the hands grasping either spears, waddies, boomerangs, or other instruments. And so, after a series of evolutions too rapid and too wild to define, a signal was given by the beaters of time, upon which each fire was fed with a handful of dry leaves. These, instantly blazing up, illumined the whole

scene, revealing the dusky figures of the performers, bright and agitated, quivering and vibrating, reeling and spinning, with admirable effect.

Again the fires were fed, and the glare of the picture was more intense. It would have served for a sketch of Pandemonium. The jump now kept time with each beat, and at every leap the dancers took about six inches to one side; while this motion was conducted in lines right and left. The entire tableau was thrilling, grand. The dark, wild forest scenery around, the bright fire-light gleaming on the savage and uncouth figures of the men, their naturally dark hue being made to look absolutely unearthly by their rudely artificial coloring, which also gave them an indescribably ghastly and fiendish aspect; their grotesque attitudes, their peculiarly strange and energetic contortions and movements, together with the inhuman sound of their yelling song, mingled with the wild and monotonous wail of the women, made altogether a very near approach to the horribly sublime.

The excitement produced among the actors by this dance was extreme. Comparatively listless at first, they were filled with sudden energy on joining in it, and every nerve was strung to the utmost degree. Then it was that animation, wild and picturesque, and thrilling in its theatrical intensity, lived in every movement, every gesture, and every cry, to which was given a momentary but vivid existence. The fires for a while sustained gradually lowered, and the performance ended by a triumphant flourish of many voices, accompanied with a loud tattoo beaten on the stretched skins; immediately after which there was a simultaneous descent to the ground, and a universal squatting of men and women round the fires, which were again fed, and great was the crackling and the blaze, the conversation and the glee.

The light of morning was fast breaking above the eastern horizon ere the revels were done, and the feasting was over—for, reader, the corrobberri was followed by the roasting of a kangaroo, and much beside; and the tail of the kangaroo was selected for us as a special dainty. My companion had looked forward to our being eaten by this time.

“We must begone,” said I to him, after the feasting was

over, "for the wild men wish to retire to their gunyas; and we to continue on our journey."

The horses had been left grazing at a short remove, and almost within sight, and the dusky throng were somewhat scattered; some, and the majority, squatted round the fires like ourselves, others were wandering about, and passing in and out of their gunyas.

The stars were still shining through the gray sky of the dawn, as we rose from our seat on a log of wood, and intimated by signs that we were about to depart. The men wished us to linger, and pointed to the gunyas in which we might slumber and abide; but we disregarded their entreaties, and set off to look after our horses. The multitude followed in our track, leaping and shouting as they went, and breaking into still greater merriment on the first sight of the horses; for on the back of the nearest three natives were scrambling, one of whom was a woman, while the other was bounding across the plain a mile or more away, with about the same number clinging to him.

This was fine sport, no doubt, for the equestrians, but not exactly the sort of amusement our wearied horses were likely to be disposed for; so we employed ourselves in relieving them of their numerous riders, by pulling the latter off the horse nearest us, and waiting the return of the other one, in order to have the satisfaction of repeating the ceremony. This was accomplished after the lapse of about twenty minutes, when we mounted and rode off amid the shouts of the entire tribe. A scampering crowd of agile young runners accompanied us for nearly a mile, after which they turned back, and in all probability went to bed, and that at a more advanced hour than was usual with them—although the natives of Australia are notorious for sitting up half the night long. Hence perhaps their astronomical knowledge, which is very keen.

We were away—galloping across the landscape, in the rising light of morning.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE RETURN.

“Wade,” said I, after we had left the scene of the corrobberri far behind and were on the look-out for a squatter’s hut where we might breakfast, “I’ve had enough of this. Roughing it in the bush is all very well in its way, but, vulgarly speaking, I have other fish to fry. Therefore, I propose that we make tracks for Sandhurst and our dog-cart at once, and from there drive straight back to Melbourne. I guess we’ll meet more bullets than nuggets by remaining here.”

“As you say,” replied Reginald, “I’m ready, but I wouldn’t have missed these adventures on any account. By Jove, this country beats Africa hollow. Those gentlemen of England who sit at home at ease, wouldn’t believe in this sort of thing for a moment, and would to a certainty, put us down as Munchausens, if we told them the plain unvarnished truth. Only fancy the luxury of being able to say when we are rheumatic cripples, half a century hence, that we saw or did this, that or the other thing, in our day. Why, I consider ‘sticking up’ cheap at the price we paid for it. Yes, old boy, I feel like Mark Tapley, perfectly jolly under the ordeal.”

Had my mind been less pre-occupied with Gertrude Morgan and the romantic but painful circumstances which had been so recently disclosed to me, I should doubtless have felt as Reginald Wade did, and prolonged my stay in the bush, but my anxiety to return to New York overcame every other consideration, and my thoughts were engrossed in the contemplation of the woman I loved, and the drama in which my long lost mother now appeared as the central figure. How I yearned to meet them both! Perhaps another letter from Gertrude had reached Melbourne during my absence, and I was not there to receive it! The very thought disturbed me, and I reproached myself as I had often done before.

We reached Sandhurst on the evening of the following day without mishap, and found our hired dog-cart in the yard of the stable where we left it.

On our way back to Melbourne we put up at the inn at Kilmore, where we met with a variety of characters, among whom was one evidently associated with the squatting interest, whose conversation evinced a fearful neglect of his education, and an absence from the pale of good society. He narrated to me an episode in his bush life which well-nigh proved fatal, and which I submit in the language of the man, for the edification of those who may feel an interest in the nefarious exploits of the bushranging hordes of the Australian wilderness:

“Few of those who are out here now, sir, knows what us old hands had to go through—shut up in the bush—not seeing a strange soul for many a month. I was down at Geelong many years ago; I had come down with some sheep from a station I was then on. There was a fine young fellow with me. We’d done our business there, got our orders, and such like, and prepared to set off home. I took him back with me. So we filled a couple o’ bottles with rum in the town, and slung them on our saddles, and off we went. Old hands, like us, sir, don’t mind a night out. Tether your horse, throw a blanket round you, and there you are.

“Well the moon was shining brightly, and Tom Brooks—that was my mate’s name—was singing out at the top of his voice some old song, when I saw, behind a clump of trees, a horse’s head.

“‘Hallo, Tom,’ says I, ‘what’s ahead there?’

“Tom saw the head as well as I did, and trots up to the clump.

“‘Hold hard, Tom,’ said I, ‘there’s some one besides.’

“‘Throw your hands up,’ roars a big voice, and two chaps, with a couple of muskets, showed themselves, and covered us as cleanly as the thing could be done.

“‘Hands up,’ roars one of the men: mine went up directly. I hadn’t so much as a riding whip with me, and though I don’t mind tackling a man when I must do it, even now, I wasn’t going to fight a loaded gun. But poor Tom, who was full of valor from the drops of rum he’d been sipping during the day, cries out ‘Hands up b ——,’ and charges at the fellow, full gallop. The ruffian took a clear aim, and I saw the poor fel-

low reel in his saddle. As the horse he was on, alarmed at the shot, plunged a little, I saw the body fall off—the feet, after a slight resistance, tumbled clear of the stirrup—saw the horse plunge on. Ay, sir, and see it now as clearly as then, although so many years have passed away. It's as fresh to me when I speak of it as if 't were yesterday. All this didn't take so long as it takes to tell it, when I saw poor Tom drop dead. I was about to push at his murderer, but the click of the other fellow's trigger made me stop, and when he said 'Dismount,' I did. There wasn't a great deal to be got off me—a few pound notes, a silver watch, and an old ring, that I'd had fourteen year or so. Off poor Tom there warn't so much, but what there was they took. While one fellow was searching me, the other covered me with his musket, and catching his eye, I, fool-like, muttered, half aloud, 'It's Hooker.' 'By ——,' cried one scoundrel, 'it's Dick Tyler—he must die.'

“But the little fellow was against shedding more blood; and, after some talk, during which, I assure you, I felt very queer, they took my tether-rope, and commenced making me fast to a tree. It was in vain I told them they'd better kill me at once; that few folks passed that road, and that it was as much murder to tie me there to starve as to stretch me, on the flat of my back, aside my poor mate. However, they tied me. They fastened me by the hands, legs, and neck to a tree, and never was a poor fowl put on the spit more tightly skewered than I was by my own tether-rope. After the chaps got off, I don't know how I felt for an hour or two, but, after that, I know I began to feel queer. As I'd been tied, I could just see Tom's head, and once or twice I thought I saw it move. Then every blast of the wind were so many voices in my ear: the villains coming back to finish me; or the natives—for there were natives in those days—who might spear and eat me. Then I thought of all I'd been told about snakes and poisonous reptiles. And then, as morning dawned, I really believe I was half-mad. I can't express exactly what I felt; I know this, I tried once or twice to pray a bit, but I couldn't. I suppose I began the Lord's prayer twenty times, and stuck fast in the middle of it. As the sun got up, thirst and hunger took hold of me, and as my hat got knocked off while I was

being made fast, its rays began to scorch my head, and almost sent me raving. Now I shouted loudly, in hope—a vain hope—some one might be passing, and hear me; or that the bush-rangers would come back and finish me, which I thought would be the best thing for me. Then I cried, oh! so piteously; and then, again I tried to pray a bit, but I couldn't again. It wasn't that I was afraid to die—we all on us must die; therefore, it's no use fearing death. But to die in that way; to die raving mad, from the effects of the sun, or of starvation. The thoughts o' that took hold on me in the middle of the prayer, and then I howled and bellowed. When I think what I suffered that day, I wonder I'm here to tell you. There was a heavy dew that night, and that eased my thirst a bit; although, as I couldn't turn my head, the moisture that was on my clothes was of little use to me. But hunger came on me; and then, as the moon was rather dull next night, I began again to dread the snakes, and so passed another fearful, horrid time on it. Day and night seemed as if 't were all one. The sun got up again, and again I roared and shouted; but human nature was almost exhausted; and I knows no more than, just after the sun crossed its line, I begun to babble of home, and of the parish church and school-house; and then I remember crying bitterly; and then—I remember no more.

“How I got out of the scrape, was this: I told you the drays were left in town for supplies. Well, they started next day to us, and knowing Tom and me had these two big bottles, they thought they might push on and overtake us, and have a carouse afore they parted company; so, on they came, and I needn't tell you, very surprised and very frightened they were, when they saw Brooks lying dead on the ground, and heard me chattering in a strange way some lingo, one of the men said as he'd never heard on before, fast bound to a tree, neither horses to be seen, and not a soul near. Well, sir, to cut my tale short, they soon spiled a cask o' stuff they were taking home, and gave me a drink o' that; tea they couldn't make, for there was no water near; but they well rubbed my hands and head with spirits, and so got me round; but it was a long job. Poor Tom's body they put on one of the drays, and me on the other, and off they took us.”

“And were the bushrangers taken?” I asked.

Not as I know on,” answered the man. “We did all we could to catch them, but then and now are two different times, Sir, and nothing could be done.”

CHAPTER XLVI.

ANOTHER LETTER.

We returned to Melbourne a week in advance of the earliest date named by Captain Whittlestick as his time for sailing, and found that he would be ready to leave in ten days. No other vessel we found was likely to sail sooner, so we waited.

There was no letter for me at the Post-Office when I returned, but two days afterwards a ship arrived direct from New York. With impatience I lingered near the Post-office while the mail was being sorted, and when the delivery windows opened I was the first to present myself at “A to F,” and call my own name.

To my great delight a letter was handed me, bearing the New York post-mark, but this time directed in a strange masculine hand. I felt a shock of disappointment and apprehension. Why had my darling Gertrude not written me, and who was the writer of this?

I opened it nervously and read:—

New-York, Everett House,
February 4, 1853.

“MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND: As your mother’s uncle, and one very much interested in you, I write at her suggestion, to request your immediate return, either to the United States or England, in order to be present during some very important legal proceedings, in which you are immediately and deeply concerned.

“The facts are mainly these:

“Mr. Henry Duncan married my niece, Miss Harriet Gibson, in London, in the year 1828, and within a year afterwards

they left England on a visit to Newfoundland, where his father resided. They subsequently proceeded to the United States, and were living at Boston when a son was born. Immediately Mr. Duncan used his influence over his wife to induce her to allow her child to be put in charge of a nurse, to which, however, she did not yield her assent. But a fever reducing her to a prostrate condition soon afterwards, her husband made use of the opportunity to carry out his design of sending the child away. When she recovered, to her great grief, he informed her that the child was dead; and all the circumstances favored this conclusion, and the mother believed she had really lost her child, and wept over its supposed grave in Mount Auburn Cemetery.

“I have now to inform you that the representations made by Mr. Duncan, respecting his son’s death, have been discovered to be false, and that the child he buried as his own was really one of other parentage, which he obtained from the Boston hospital. It has been shown, on the testimony of a girl who accompanied him in a carriage, and carried the child on the day it was taken from its mother’s side, that he gave it into the charge of a strange woman, Mrs. Kate Wilkins by name, near the village of Green, not far from Boston, giving her a hundred dollars at the time, and promising her periodical payments for its maintenance. The boy remained seven years with her, and was then transferred to the care of Mrs. Bangs, the housekeeper of the Medical College, in Boston, where he remained till 1846, when he disappeared mysteriously. He was known as Washington Edmonds, and from all that I can learn, you are the missing one.

“Now, in order to account for the motive your father had in destroying your identity, it is necessary to tell you that your mother had a fortune, valued at nearly a hundred thousand pounds, a life interest in which, excepting a portion reserved for her own use, was settled on her husband on their marriage. Very soon afterwards she made a will, devising the whole of her property absolutely to him, if no issue should survive her. It was, therefore, all-important to him, actuated as he was by mercenary desires, that no issue should survive; but not wishing to run the risk of adding crime to crime, he used all his

skill to convince your mother that you were dead, without your actually being so. What his views may have been with regard to herself, I shall not venture to surmise.

“I need hardly impress upon you further the urgent necessity that exists for your return by the next vessel sailing after your receipt of this, to facilitate which, in the event of its being otherwise pecuniarily inconvenient to you, I inclose a draft on the Union Bank, Melbourne, for two hundred pounds.

“My address in London is 12 Bryanston Square.

“In New York you can learn where I am, on your arrival, from Mr. Robert Seymour, Counsellor-at-Law, 32 William Street, or in Boston, from Mr. John Fowler, 10 State Street.

“Your mother requests me to convey her warmest love to you, and anxiety to see you, and I remain

“Yours very sincerely,

“EDWARD BERESFORD.”

In the same envelope there was a sealed inclosure, directed in a female hand, unmistakably English in its angularities.

Thus it ran :

“MY DEAR BOY: Do return. Your long-lost mother yearns to see you. Write to me, and direct your letter to 12 Bryanston Square, London. I have been deprived of a life-long joy by supposing you were dead. May heaven preserve us to meet. It is now the one great wish of my existence, my dear, my only child. I do hope you will come soon. Do not delay a moment after you receive this. You will have a very warm and affectionate welcome, and fortune will open a new prospect to you. My uncle's letter explains all. For the sake of justice, come.

“Your most loving but anxious mother,

“HARRIET DUNCAN.”

The handwriting of my mother! How I gazed at it and kissed it, and pictured her before my mind's eye, and read her character like a fortune-teller, by her caligraphy. What a beautiful and glorious reality she had become, and how I yearned to meet her—ah! how fondly and with what tender filial affection and earnest solicitude! There was now another to share my love. I adored Gertrude; but my mother! How

ecstatic the thought that I had a living mother. The realization of the dream of my life was joy, felicity, happiness, satisfaction. I was rewarded for all the trials, hardships, sufferings I had experienced. I soared on the wings of romance to heaven, and bugled music to the angels. I began a new life; I breathed incense, sipped nectar, and feasted upon ambrosia. Do you laugh at me? Then laugh; it is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous.

My impatience made me long for the wings of a dove, so that I might flee to her; and I fretted like a wild bird newly caged, at the restraints imposed by time and distance. Every thing but thought was too tardy for my purpose.

CHAPTER XLVII.

DR. SHARPE CATCHES A TARTAR.

I was lounging with Reginald Wade in the sitting-room of the Prince of Wales Hotel, on the morning following the receipt of the letter referred to in the preceding chapter, when Dr. Sharpe, late of the "Harbinger," presented himself with a black eye and many congratulations.

"Doctor, Doctor, how came you by that?" asked Mr. Wade.

"Come by it, my dear Sir! It's a monstrous case. My first patient, too. I'll tell you how it was. I'm to appear at the Police Court to-morrow morning about it. An assault warrant has been issued, and I hope the fellow will be punished. It was just this way;" and he proceeded to explain how it happened. But instead of quoting his own words, I will give the evidence as it transpired on the following morning. When the case was called on, Dr. Sharpe stepped upon the witness-stand, and kissed his thumb-nail, to avoid contact with a somewhat odorous and discolored volume.

"On Thursday," said he, after being thus sworn, "I went to this man's house."

"What's that?" exclaimed a red speckled-faced man without any perceptible eye-lashes, bobbing up like a jack in the box, near the complainant, and pulling out a brown memorandum-book, and sharpening his pencil. "Now, Sir, proceed."

"I called," resumed the Doctor, "at this man's house to see a patient, who had arrived by the steamer "Harbinger"—of which I was surgeon on her last trip—when this man told me he was not at home. But I was certain that he was at home, and I said I would wait in the passage until I saw him. To this the defendant objected, and we had some words, which led to his striking me with the knob of a stick he carried."

"Perjury, and I'll prove it," exclaimed the irate defendant. "It was a ruler," and he muttered, "knob of a stick," as he pencilled the words.

"He then," continued the Doctor, "struck me a blow in the face with his fist, and used opprobrious language."

"Did he use more force than was necessary to oblige you to leave the house?" inquired the magistrate.

"I think he pushed me further than was requisite."

"Ah! totally false. I didn't push him further than the passage."

"My nose bled from the effects of the blow and a boy, who is in court now, brought me a wash-hand basin."

"Another falsehood," cried the irascible defendant. "Wash-hand basin! it was, eh? Ha! ha!" and his pencil was again busied.

"Your conduct," interrupted the magistrate, "is very improper, and I must insist that while you are here you conduct yourself with more respect."

"Ten thousand apologies," was the reply. "I never entertained the most remote idea of offering disrespect to the bench. A highly comic thought having struck me, I couldn't resist an ebullition of merriment."

The boy who had brought the wash-hand basin was now called as a witness on behalf of the plaintiff.

He was red-headed, freckled, pug-nosed, and apparently about twelve. The defendant's attorney endeavored to prevent his being heard, and with this view he questioned him upon his knowledge of the nature of an oath.

"Do you know what an oath is, boy?" he asked.

"I think I do, Sir."

"What is it?"

"Oh!" interrupted the Doctor's attorney, "it is not every one that can define the nature of an oath. I question if many in court can."

"Do you know what an oath is, boy?"

"I do, Sir."

"What is it?"

"I can't tell."

"Do you know what would become of you if you took a false oath?"

"Something bad, Sir."

"What?"

"I don't know, Sir."

"Where would you go if you took a false oath?"

"Where would I go, Sir? I don't know."

"Where would he probably go?" interrupted the opposition attorney.

"Do you know where hell is?"

"I do, Sir."

"Well, what do you think of that place if you took a false oath?"

"I don't know, Sir."

"Do you ever go to church?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Do you ever say your prayers?"

"Sometimes, Sir."

"You are going too deep into the theology of the case," remarked the magistrate. "Pray come to the point."

"Tell me, my boy," said the latter, "do you know what'll happen to you if you tell a lie?"

"Is it where I'll be sent to?" he asked, looking round in evident consternation, towards the dock.

"Look at his Honor, my boy, and don't be frightened," said the attorney. "Where will you go to if you tell a lie?"

"Where will I be sent to?"

"Aye, after you're dead."

"After I'm dead?" said he, suddenly brightening up. "Oh! I'll go to heaven, to be sure."

“What, for telling a lie?”

“Oh! no; I’ll go to the devil, I suppose, for that.”

“Swear the witness,” said the magistrate. “He understands the nature of an oath perfectly.” And he was sworn accordingly; upon which he corroborated the Doctor’s testimony.

“Am I now permitted to enter upon my defence?” asked the defendant.

“You can proceed,” said the magistrate; whereupon he elbowed a passage right and left, and threw himself into a Demosthenic attitude. “Fortunately,” said he, flourishing his note-book, “the strong points are already registered. It will only be necessary for me to give a succinct account of this very remarkable transaction. This person did call to see a gentleman staying at my house; and knowing that his indisposition had been brought on by want of medical skill on the part of the plaintiff, I determined, at all risk, to prevent his ingress into the chamber of the invalid. With this view I stationed myself at the foot of the stairs, and with my walking-stick, assumed an attitude no prudent man would have ventured to disturb. The plaintiff insisted on passing. I remonstrated. He attacked me. I defended myself; and after a short but desperate combat, I achieved a victory by placing him on his back in the passage. To this single statement I feel it quite unnecessary to add another syllable”—hereupon he retired, but returned again to finish his sentence—“except to impress on the Bench the right every British subject has of ejecting intruders from his house. It is impossible to say another word on this subject.” And he retired again, only, however, to again come forward. “Except that, as an educated person, I consider the use of opprobrious epithets unfit for a man—improper for——”

“Pray, Sir, be quiet,” said the magistrate.

“Improper for a gentleman and disgraceful to a member of ——”

At this juncture a policeman took hold of him by the collar, and stood before him, with a view of awing him into silence; but peeping under the officer’s arm, he finished his sentence by ejaculating—“of a civilized community.”

To the Doctor's surprise, the magistrate gave it as his opinion that the complainant ought not to have persisted in remaining in the house, and that as the testimony as to who made the first assault was conflicting, he must discharge the warrant.

And so ended the great little difficulty which initiated Dr. Sharpe into the mysteries of practice in Australia.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

ON THE ORINOCO.

The time at length came when the "Blue Peter" fluttered from the mast-head of the "Orinoco," as a signal that she was about to sail, and that a pilot was wanted. Captain Whittlestick was on board giving orders in his usual sledge-hammer style, and so were Reginald Wade and myself. The sailors were busy moving from point to point of the ship letting-go ropes, bending sails, and weighing anchor with their cheery "Heigh-hi-ho." The warm June sunshine was lighting up the broad bay, and the rigging of the hundreds of ships at anchor, and a moderately fresh breeze, filled the sails of about a dozen vessels tacking into port.

"Well, you were very successful in getting a crew," I remarked to Captain Whittlestick.

"Very successful, over the left, you mean, I guess," said he, rolling a quid in his mouth. "I'm only about half-manned, and half the fellows I've got are land-lubbers, who'll leave me at Callao to hunt up those Peruvian gold mines that the papers have had so much to say about lately. Some folks are never satisfied, and don't know a good thing when they have it. These darned critters know no better than to leave a certainty for an uncertainty. There's no accounting for tastes."

"Well, Captain," I ventured to remark, "if we have much heavy weather the crew will be any thing but a happy family,

and we'll stand a chance of going to Davy Jones's locker before our time."

"Leave me alone for that," said he, "I'm as good as half a dozen hands myself, on a pinch, and it's not the first time I've been short-handed, by a long shot. I never lost a ship but once, and that was through no fault of mine—eh, Washington?"

"She's a little crank, Captain," I observed, as she lurched rather heavily.

"Yes, the sons of guns promised me a hundred tons more ballast, but they never brought it, and I couldn't wait till doomsday. I ordered three hundred tons of sand and only got two. She's too high out of the water, that's a fact, but I guess I'll put her through all right."

The result of the ship being under-ballasted, was that she keeled over in a fresh breeze, more like a yacht in a regatta than a clipper of twelve hundred tons, and as we met with heavy weather from the first day we were at sea, life on board was the reverse of comfortable, and eating and drinking were achievements requiring more dexterity than they are usually considered to call for. Sails were split, the maintopgallant masts were carried away, and all hands were kept hard at work.

Troubles never come alone. One morning, while the ship was laying-to in a hurricane under bare poles, I heard a scuffle on deck. The captain was in the cabin at the time, but he ran up, and then the commotion of feet increased, but I could not hear the sound of voices owing to the deep whistling roar of the wind through the rigging.

I had just come down from the deck, where the spectacle was sublime—the sea running literally mountains high, and covered with flying foam, while the wind blew so hard that to face it was to lose my breath, and the air was thick with spray. The helm was lashed, and the ship rolled helplessly in the raging sea.

I rushed on deck, and saw the captain struggling with one of the seamen, upon whom he inflicted a tremendous blow which sent him flying against the bulwarks, where his head struck with such force that I feared his skull was fractured. The man lay stunned and livid while Captain Whittlestick uttered a volley of imprecations against him.

"What did he do?" I enquired.

"Do,—the — cuss,—he threw Marlin, the mate, overboard."

"Threw the mate overboard just now?" I exclaimed with a shudder.

"Aye. He did it just as I came on deck. I was a second too late to stop him—darn his eyes."

We looked over the ship's side, but of course no sign of the poor man was visible, and if there had been, it would have been impossible to render him any assistance, as no boat could have been launched in such a sea. The first wave would have stove it in like an egg-shell.

"It would have served him right," reflected Whittlestick, "if I had put my knife into his gizzard."

At that moment the crest of a heavy sea swept the poop deck and washed the body of the unconscious seaman to the opposite side of the ship, and as it went it left a track of blood. The man was bleeding at the back of the head. There he lay motionless—a melancholy spectacle.

"That man's dead, I think," said the second mate who came on deck an hour afterwards, turning him over and examining him. And dead he really was.

"Serves him right," ejaculated the Captain. "Have his body searched for valuables, if he has any, and then chuck him overboard, but be sure he's dead before you do it. He ought to have been sent after poor Marlin alive, the cuss,—that would have been an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and such chaps hate to be paid in their own coin. Oh, they feel very bad about it, I can tell you, particularly when they suddenly find a bullet or a bowie knife finding its way among their precious giblets. However, I was brought up a God-fearing Baptist,—going to meeting twice every Sunday,—and I wouldn't wilfully send a man to his long account, but when he tries to throw me overboard, after he has thrown my mate, I feel just like settling his hash in double-quick time."

In about two hours afterwards the dead sailor's body was tipped by the carpenter from a plank on the main deck over the ship's side. The fall was scarcely heard by those on board

who witnessed it, and the body instantaneously disappeared beneath the foam.

The ship's crew having been thus decimated, and another of the hands being sick and confined to his bunk, the undermanning became a serious matter, and for our own safety, if nothing more, I volunteered to render all the assistance I could, and took my place in the watch like any sailor, while Reginald Wade expressed his willingness to do likewise.

The weather continued very stormy and cold, and several times the ship broached-to and came within an ace of foundering, and I had to go aloft along with the crew to furl sails. On three occasions, too, the sand ballast shifted, and the vessel nearly capsized. The spare water casks, also, which had been filled with salt-water as ballast, broke away from their lashings and were knocked into staves. Notwithstanding all this, however, we made the voyage from port to port in thirty-five days, during which time, except when within view of the coast on starting and arriving, we did not sight a single sail. A lonely waste of waters is the South Pacific, and anything but true to its name.

The town of Callao, looking like so much stage-scenery, appeared before us as we lay anchored in the picturesque bay, with the lofty Andes looming up in the background. Alike with Reginald Wade I was glad to go ashore, and our first business after landing was to engage our passage on the next English steamer for Panama. She was due in four days afterwards from Valparaiso, so we passed most of the intervening time in Lima, the capital of the Peruvian republic—seven miles distant by railway,—and made good use of our time in sight-seeing. We strolled through the beautiful alamedas, the plazas, the streets—each with its running brook down the centre—the old cathedrals—whose bells are ever ringing—and actually tried to dance the lancers on horseback, according to the fashion of the country. We attended the theatres—of which there were two—played billiards in the hotels, and dined at the British Minister's, Mr. Wade having been acquainted with the family of the latter—who was soon afterwards assassinated while bathing—at home.

We saw the priests playing at dice-monte in the gambling-

rooms and the *senoritas* walking the streets in light French slippers, with head and face—all but one eye—concealed by the silk shawls which have taken the place of the *sayo a manta*, and the turkey-buzzards perched on the housetops. But the great sight of the city—the bull-fight—came off as a usual thing only on Sunday, and we were advised not to miss seeing that on any account, so I agreed with Reginald Wade to go, notwithstanding it was the Sabbath day—which I always remember and strive to keep holy—for the reason that I hold it as a rule to be good doctrine to do in Rome as the Romans do. Here was a national custom, and I would at least witness it once, if only in the spirit of a moral reformer.

Sunday came, and with it the festivities of the week. The church-bells rang out with even more than usual clangor; crowds of gay-looking men, and graceful *senoritas*, full of witchery and languishing graces, moved along the side-walks, and, mass over, all Lima flirted, and played at billiards, and gambled, and went to the bull-fight preparatory to the theatres in the evening, and held their revels with the spirit and delight of people to whom pleasure and gayety are indispensable elements of daily existence.

At two o'clock this Sabbath afternoon, I threaded my way with Reginald Wade and Captain Whittlestick—who had accidentally met us at our hotel—through the Calle de Comercio, and the Plaza, both of which were thronged with people, and then across the stone bridge, built in 1638—five hundred and fifty feet in length, and supported by six arches—after which, turning to the right, we entered the cool shade of the Alameda, leading to, and passing the *Plaza firme del Acho*, or bull-ring.

Sunday was evidently *the* day on which to see the people of Lima to advantage, and here was the place *par excellence*. I lingered with pleasure upon the prospect, as viewed from the vicinity of the bridge in the eastern suburb. It was much more picturesque and extensive than that seen from the other, or Lima, side of the river. The walled sides of the city flanking the stream, and overgrown with creeping plants, and stunted wall shrubs, inclosed half-ruined buildings, quaint in architecture, and so close to the wall as almost to overhang it, and threaten, on the first motion of an earthquake, to topple over

into the water beneath. The stream itself, untraversed by a boat, was a pleasing feature in the landscape, as the eye took in its winding course, and traced it among rocks and sandbanks, and over plains of verdure towards its ocean *embouchure*, seven miles away. Eastward and northward, the dark and giant mountains rose in the distance—their whitened summits lost in a cap of cloud—and nearer, the spurs of the Cordillera, whose conical peaks were crowned with crucifixes, while the delicious Alameda formed a beautiful vista for a mile and more to the south.

Crowds of equestrians, pedestrians, and a few wheeled vehicles, chiefly belonging to foreigners, were moving leisurely in the direction of the bull-ring. All ranks of the community were here represented. We paid half-a-dollar each, the price of admission, and entered the amphitheatre. There we found that we could either take our places on the seats that circled the ring, and rose in tiers one above the other, or pay an additional price for a seat in a private box. There were two rows of these boxes, one on the ground level, and above which rose the seats of the amphitheatre; and the other which was gained by ascending a flight of ricketty wooden stairs outside the building. We chose chairs in one of the upper boxes, and paid an extra half-dollar accordingly.

“It’s just about fourteen years since I paid my money here first,” remarked Captain Whittlestick, “and then I came pretty near getting gored by one of the bulls that broke loose behind the scenes somewheres.”

“Then is there danger?” asked Reginald Wade.

“I guess not much,” was the captain’s rejoinder, and we all ascended together.

The size of the place may be readily imagined, when I say that it was capable of containing eight thousand people, and that few short of that number were now present. The scene was, altogether, brilliant and exciting. Exquisitely dressed ladies, with their faces concealed by the shawl or mantilla—forming a complete disguise, and sacred from another’s touch—and men, in equally elegant attire, were seated in their boxes; while thousands of the lower orders, in their bright and picturesque costumes, filled the entire tiers of seats up to the

roof, all busily conversing together, or signaling each other in the most happy manner. A fine band of music struck up as I looked round, and immediately afterwards the President—General Ramon Castilla—and his suite, entered in full uniform, and took their places in a box reserved for them.

A few moments afterwards the music ceased, and as suddenly the hum of voices gave place to intense silence, as several men in tight garments, light in texture and color, entered the ring through a doorway, each with a bright-colored flag in his hand, following whom came several horsemen, and a horsewoman, each armed with long spears and waving pennons, all of whom entered with a rush, and to the blast of a solitary trumpet. The capeodores—men on foot—bowed to the assembly, and the horses of the picadores curveted about in evident excitement and timidity, for they were animals trained to the bull-ring, and, knowing its dangers, were as agile and dexterous in their movements as the men. There was another outbreak of voices, and the performers were hailed with delight by the immense concourse.

Again there was a sudden silence, as a door facing that by which the performers had entered was thrown open by one of the men on foot, who concealed himself behind it, and all eyes were directed towards the open door.

“Now the fun begins,” remarked Captain Whittlestick. “Just watch how these cold-blooded sinners will gloat over the torture of the poor dumb brutes. It’s a pity they’ve no Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals here as you have in your country, Mr. Wade. If some terrible accident were to occur here—and there’s nothing more likely in such a flimsily built concern—I should think it was a visitation of Providence upon them for desecrating the Sabbath and indulging in such a savage sport. But I guess they think it’s all right—habit is second nature, and “what’s bred in the bone comes out in the flesh.”

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE FATAL BULL FIGHT.

The silence was broken, but the excitement grew intense when a bull came bounding furiously through the doorway into the arena, with uplifted tail and lowered head. For a moment he paused, and with a savage roar, upraised horns, and a maddened, infuriated look—the result of recent torture inflicted behind the scenes—took a survey of his position, and then rushed wildly at the man nearest him in the ring, who escaped by running into one of the retreats—places of refuge provided for the purpose—the bull galloping after him at such a tremendous rate of speed that the mere concussion of the animal against the side of the amphitheatre shook the whole structure in that vicinity.

Foiled and enraged, the brute turned quickly round and charged those near him, who added to his rage by flinging barbed arrows at his neck, where they stuck, and tortured him still more. As the bull rushed, so the runners and the riders dispersed, the former seeking refuge when necessary in the retreats round the arena, or in a small wooden inclosure in the centre provided for the same purpose, and where the tormentor waved his flag in the enraged animal's eyes, and avoided the horns which were thrust at him by moving in a circle within the paling. The bull betrayed great disappointment and anger at not being able to reach his enemy, and he stamped and bellowed and quivered, till bewildered by the crimson cloaks that were waved before his eyes, he turned about and this time directed his attack upon one of the equestrians—the female—when, notwithstanding the quick manœuvre of both horse and rider, the horns were planted in the animal's side, and over it went, rolling its rider on the ground. The picadores and capedores at once rushed forward in a body, and diverted the attention of the bull by a dexterous waving of their flags.

The prostrate woman, who had remained face downwards and perfectly motionless after the overthrow—a plan invariably

adopted under such circumstances by all bull-fighters, in order to induce a cessation of hostilities on the part of the bull, who never gores his dead victim—was on her feet, alike with the wounded steed, the instant the author of her downfall had galloped off to the other side of the ring.

The immense concourse made the amphitheatre resound with their cries of Viva! Viva! and the quivering animal, with its entrails hanging from the recently inflicted wound—the woman, armed with her long spear, seated cross-legged on its back—was curveted about to avoid the assaults of the bull, just as it had been before the accident. Arrow after arrow was now thrown at the neck of the frantic, persecuted beast, whose impotent rage was most terrible to witness, as, with glaring and bloodshot eyeballs, and foaming nostrils, he stood at bay, quivering in every joint, and sending up bellowings of anger and defiance. Vainly he again endeavored to annihilate his opponents; rushing at one he was pursued by another, until paralyzed by rage and exhaustion, he with maddened eye warily watched his tormentors, and only charged at intervals. There was a flourish of trumpets, and the matador presented himself sword in hand. He was to inflict the death-blow.

Shouts of Viva! Viva! rang round the building. The matador now calmly awaited the onset of the infuriated animal, whose attention he attracted by waving his red cloak, the other combatants on foot having meanwhile retired to the retreats, or ceased waving their colors. The bull, just now pawing the ground, and giving vent to his agony in a savage roar of wrath, suddenly dashed forward with measured plunge, lowered head, and closed eyes—bulls always charge with their eyes shut—towards his adversary, who stood with his flag raised in the left hand, and his sword steadily poised in the right. The very earth seemed to tremble beneath the violence of his charge.

At that instant, the matador, coolly aiming his thrust, plunged the weapon deep between the shoulders, and so into the spinal marrow of the now vanquished bull. But he still strove to advance a few paces further towards his enemy, only however to falter at the first step, and fall groaning on his

knees; he uttered another groan, darted another heart-rending look of agony and despair, and then rolled over. Another feeble effort followed; his eyes glazed, and he was dead. It was a pitiable, cruel sight! Meanwhile the shouts of Viva! Viva! were renewed in compliment to the successful matador. The door by which the riders had entered was now thrown open, and the trumpets again sounded, when in came four well-caparisoned horses driven at a gallop, and harnessed to a small pair of wheels. Suddenly they stopped in front of the carcass, and buckling the head of the one to the axle of the other, the rider of one of the horses cracked his whip, and away they galloped, dragging the slain along the ground after them, and disappearing in a moment.

The equestrians followed at the same rapid pace, and with them the sickening spectacle of the bull-gored horse. There was an interval of about five minutes, during which there was much animated conversation going forward, and many signals exchanged. A flourish of trumpets succeeded, the picadores again entered the ring, the capeadores took up their positions, and the door for the bull was once more opened by one of the runners who stood behind it, while the bull, horns down and tail erect, plunged through into the ring with as much wrath and fury depicted in his looks as had been exhibited by his predecessor.

The wounded horse was again quivering and curveting in evident pain, fear, and excitement, and the runners were again flinging their barbed arrows, and the riders pricking with their lances as the infuriated bull rushed and charged madly round the ring, while the buzz of voices, and the waving of red flags, increased his rage and bewilderment, and the vivas of the multitude encouraged the picadores to imperil themselves still more, and perform their most skilful and active feats of daring and evasion. Meanwhile the ground shook with the heavy bounding tramp of the savage, roaring, and persecuted animal, that, foiled in his desperate attempts to gore his tormentors, paused in his mad career, stamped the earth, foamed at the nostrils, and quivered in every limb,—the fire of rage and the madness of despair flashing in his blood-shot eyes. Thus for a moment he paused, panting, and bleeding from the wounds

of the arrows that were lodged in his flesh; and with lowered brow, fiercely glancing at his foes.

At this stage, the matador, not the same, however, who dispatched the first bull, appeared with his sword, and, waving his red flag before the eyes of the brute from a conspicuous position, awaited his onset. The animal, measuring well his distance, charged with heavy furious tramp. The matador poised his slender, burnished blade, and, directing his aim at the proper moment of advance, plunged it up to the hilt in the same spot as that chosen by his predecessor.

The animal halted instantly, belching floods of blood from the mouth and nostrils, in the most fearful, sickening, almost heart-rending manner; and the sword having gone completely through his chest, so that the point of the blade protruded from his breast, he was also bleeding from that part, as well as between the shoulders. The vomiting of blood was so great as to be suffocating, and the poor brute, with an imploring, gasping effort, sank on his knees, with his sides opening and collapsing, like the motion of a pair of bellows; but it was only for a moment, and then his eyes glazed in death, and the huge monument of beef gave not even a *post-mortem* twitch or quiver.

Again the trumpets sounded, and the buzz of voices filled the air, while the large doorway was thrown open, and in at flying pace rushed the horses with the wheels. A crack of the postillion's whip was the signal for the caballos to plunge forward, and out they galloped with the carcass in their wake, and again the sickening spectacle of the wounded steed was curveted out of the ring. Five other bulls were similarly introduced into the arena, and shared a like fate. One of these it was intended to dispatch by applying a taper to a charge of gunpowder that had been fastened to the crown of his head before his admission into the circus. On the light being applied, the report produced was equal to that of a piece of ordnance, and, in addition to filling the amphitheatre with a cloud of smoke, the explosion tended very much to deafen the crowd. The bull fell instantly, without a struggle or a quiver, and as suddenly as a piece of lead when dropped.

Again there were many *vivas*, and in galloped the horses.

The head was being buckled to the wheels, when suddenly up rose the bull with a stagger, and dashed at one of the flag-bearers near him. The four horses and the wheels were off at the moment, and the gates closed, while the bull, quickly regaining consciousness, ran round the ring, attacking and dispersing the whole bevy of toreros, and plunging his horns into another horse that he overthrew, inflicting at the same time a severe horn-wound in the thigh of the rider, but instead of lingering over his fallen adversary, rushing at the rest of the party.

Instantly both man and rider regained their former position, and curveted about before the attacks of the bull, who was more troublesome, in consequence of his being half-stunned than any of the others. At length the matador adroitly attracted his attention, and dispatched him with the sword, after the manner already described; even then he struggled more, and died a harder death than any one of the others. The excitement of a rider being overthrown was very great, and was evidently relished by the audience.

After a brief interval, the last bull came bounding into the ring, and a moment later an ominous crack as of breaking timbers, was heard. The audience started, and all eyes were turned towards the spot from which it came. Almost simultaneously, Captain Whittlestick exclaimed, "The boxes are giving way," and we felt that part of the flimsy structure in which we were seated, tumbling down.

We had no time for either reflection or escape, but were literally emptied into the bull ring, with a loud crash of falling timbers and frantic cries of men and women for help.

Captain Whittlestick was thrown head foremost further into the ring than any one else I could see, but that he was not fatally injured by his fall, was evident from his immediately attempting to rise. The matadors had fled from the arena in the consternation occasioned by the giving way of this portion of the building, and the other and much larger portions which remained standing were being rapidly deserted by the panic-stricken crowd.

The Captain was struggling to extricate himself from the debris, when he was charged upon by the bull and gored dread-

fully in the body and afterwards in the face. Two of the matadors, at this juncture, rushed forward and attracted the savage animal away by flirting their flags before him, after which one of them, armed with a sword, dispatched him like the others.

The groans of the injured were now heard among the ruins, and the attendants regaining their presence of mind, came to their assistance. Fortunately, Reginald Wade and myself escaped with a few bruises, and were able to go to the relief of Captain Whittlestick, who, on being gored the second time, had uttered a yell and fallen back like a dead man.

We found him presenting a ghastly spectacle, quite unconscious, and breathing very feebly.

One of the bull's horns had we saw pierced the socket of his left eye and apparently entered the brain, and there was a deep gash in the centre of his body a little below the ribs.

The tumult continued in the boxes caused by the rush to get out of the building, and weak men and women were trampled under remorselessly by the stronger, in their terrible fright. The general impression was that the accident had been caused by an earthquake, but subsequent investigation showed that it was attributable only to rotten timbers.

We dispatched two or three messengers for doctors, and meanwhile laid our wounded friend flat on his back in the open ring. His breathing gradually became fainter and his extremities colder, and when a doctor arrived in about twenty minutes afterwards, the latter shook his head, felt his pulse, and pronounced him no more.

I turned away from the sight in tears, and exclaimed to Reginald, "Verily, in the midst of life we are in death."

CHAPTER L.

ONWARD TO NEW YORK.

All Lima was in a ferment over the catastrophe—which resulted in several more deaths—and nearly the whole population flocked to the scene.

The American Minister took charge of Captain Whittlestick's remains, and as we were to sail from Callao early in the afternoon of the next day, it was arranged that his funeral should take place in the morning. Besides the Minister, a Peruvian official from the department of foreign affairs, and the *padre* who performed the ceremony, Reginald Wade and myself, were the sole mourners, and it was with a deep melancholy that I scattered flowers on the bier. Fortunately, the Captain left neither widow nor children to mourn his loss.

At the appointed time we left Callao on board the double-funneled paddle steamer "Lima." The ocean was calm and glistened in the sunlight, and the mighty mountains reared high their whitened summits, while the rugged edges of their sweeping sides bristled against the flashing heavens, and the azure of their hue and the ocean's tranquil blue, combined to make up a picture of peaceful splendor that delighted the eye of at least one on board that gliding craft.

We kept well in with the coast, never losing sight of the Andes, and called at port after port on the way, till after we had left Guayaquil. Then we steamed direct for Panama.

My impatience to reach New York, if possible, increased, as the distance separating me from the goal of my hopes gradually lessened, and I passed much of my time in reading the cherished epistles I had received at Melbourne, and in contemplating my now glowing future. Every morning when I awoke I opened the case containing the small daguerreotype portrait of Gertrude—the likeness that I had carried next my heart ever since I left New York on that sad day—and kissed it fervently, and every night and morning, too, I prayed for her and her restoration to me with passionate earnestness,

and anticipated with joyful longing the hour when we would meet to part no more. And as often as I uttered sincere thanksgivings to the Almighty for preserving me for her through all the dangers I had encountered. I involuntarily shuddered when I thought of my own narrow escapes, and contrasted my own health and strength with the fate of others whose lot had been cast with mine—the mate of the “Orinoco” and poor Captain Whittlestick among them. How much I had to thank Divine Providence for !

The great Cordillera still lifted its rugged sides against the clear sky, as day by day we drew nearer to our destination. The trade wind died away, the heat became excessive, and not a sea-bird could be seen. Once only and that for a few hours, did we lose sight of the Andes and the now foliated coast lands. Passing the island of Gorgona, and meeting here and there, as we went, a grey old sperm whale rolling leisurely along and baring his sides to the sunlight, we early on the third morning from Guayaquil entered the beautiful bay of Panama, studded with islets covered with tropical verdure and looking charmingly picturesque.

We had to wait in Panama two days before the steamer from San Francisco connecting with that from Aspinwall to New York, arrived. Then we were jolted in a very long train drawn by an asthmatic locomotive across the isthmus—a little over forty miles in about five hours. The railway was a channel cut through the jungle—a pestilential forest rising from a black swamp. Lofty palms and plantain trees, climbing plants innumerable, and flowers of every hue flourished in wild luxuriance in this tropical labyrinth, while brilliantly plumaged birds, butterflies, and even monkeys were to be seen and heard among the branches of the larger trees.

After reaching Aspinwall—a flat unpicturesque town built on a reclaimed swamp—we embarked the same evening on board the steamer “Illinois” for New York, but called at Kingston, Jamaica, on the way, to coal, and I regret to say that the necessary labor of coaling was performed by negro women, while negro men lounged idly by.

Round flew the paddle-wheels the next morning, and we had resumed our voyage towards the Empire City.

CHAPTER LI.

THE HOUSE IN UNION SQUARE.

A prosperous voyage, and lo! the bay of New-York. Reginald Wade and I landed together at the Battery. I felt a strange joyful thrill of emotion, not unmixed with anxiety however, as I hurried into Broadway, and with my companion entered the first omnibus that passed.

I was trembling with the delights of anticipation, and withal nervous with apprehension. Was she living? was she well? Was my mother still in New York? Would I meet them both before night? Oh! how much I longed to know what weal or woe the day had in store for me! Yet I felt that disappointment would kill me; and I was eager to embrace the grim tyrant Death, if that great enemy of us all had already taken one without whom life was to me no longer worth having. If that vision by the Yarra Yarra told a true tale, then welcome, welcome the Omega of existence. I had no love of the world for its own sake; I had ever found it bitter in its fruits, and yielding no rest to any but the fortunate few; and I spurned its pomps and vanities, and looked forward to ultimate dissolution for relief. Death! that dreadful word, but how full of solace to the despairing, heart-stricken, and way-worn traveller over this arid desert of the world.

Was she dead? was she living?

How vital were those questions, and how my very life hung upon the answer.

A nervous pallor overspread my countenance as the huge, awkward vehicle threaded its way up Broadway, and I gazed on the throngs that filled the side-walks, not knowing but that a single glance might reveal my destiny. Reginald Wade left me when we reached the Metropolitan Hotel, and I pursued my way alone. It was with some trepidation that I walked from the omnibus at the corner of Fourteenth Street to the house on the east side of Union Square. I rang the bell and nerved myself for the revelation that was so soon to follow.

"Is Miss Morgan at home?"

"Yes, Sir!" said the old servant, recognizing me at a glance. "She'll be so glad to see you. Wait till I tell her."

I sprang with new life across the threshold, and with a heart palpitating with joy, was ushered into the parlor.

I was agitated with emotion and the delights of anticipation. I was almost paralyzed with joy, but what a sacred joy it was,—so nearly allied to grief that when I heard a sudden rustling of a woman's garments on the stairs, a moment after which my idol plunged wildly into my embrace, I burst into a flood of tears and wept a sincere thanksgiving. How passionately she clung to me with a tender cry of endearment, and mingled her tears with mine on my cheek, and how responsively I clasped her to my heart and kissed her again and again.

Here was true, unadulterated, unspoilt mutual affection—a rare thing, and I say it with sorrow. How few indeed are blessed with it, and yet how many sacrifice themselves by perpetrating the mockery of marriage without feeling the divine impulse. Probably if every body knew every body, every body would find somebody to love and be loved by, but every body not knowing every body every body doesn't—not by any means."

"Washington—dearest," spoke Gertrude, when her joy and grief and tears had somewhat subsided, "I am so glad you are here—so very happy." But a fresh burst of tears again overwhelmed her.

"So am I, my love," said I, and our embrace tightened. But I too could say little, much as I felt. And silence was more eloquent than words.

"I have been waiting for you so long," she said, "and what dreadful months of suspense I have endured! What hope and despondency, and even despair, I have felt; I shudder to think of it. O Washington! if you only knew all, you would pity me;" and again she sobbed almost hysterically.

Suddenly she looked up at me with glittering, gleaming eyes:

"Don't you see how changed and haggard I am?"

I did see it; but I only felt that she was the same to me as

ever. Disappointment had ploughed her features, and, alas! I saw too plainly that sorrow had withered her in her youth. I saw, alas! in her face "Consumption's waning cheek," and, O God! I shuddered to think that Death had possibly marked her for its prey—Death the great leveller of us all. And had it come to this, that after all my misfortunes and perils and struggles, the idol of my existence was to pass away as soon as it came within my grasp? How hard I tried to dispel the fatal presentiment; and then how eagerly I hoped that we might die together!

I had no wish to survive her, no more than her love for me. My desire was to be buried with either in the one grave. Our souls were too closely united together ever to be disunited in life. To me at least disunion would have been death: I should have traversed the streets—perhaps for a day or year—a walking sepulchre—and then another worm would have returned to mother earth—a happy relief, for existence is not always worth having, and may it not become unbearable?

Melancholy reflections these for a lover newly returned from a distant country after a long absence; but was the beautiful ruin that stood by my side not enough to arouse these gloomy forebodings?

What of that bright hectic flush? The rose may flourish on decay.

"You are indeed a little altered," I remarked, "but time works changes; time, too, is the great healer. You are no more changed than I am, but perhaps I show it less."

She looked steadfastly into my eyes and murmured:

"Yes, I am—you look well and strong, while I am only a wreck," and she wept bitterly.

I tried to soothe her.

"But," she continued, "I don't care, now that you have come; I can resign myself to die; still I should like to live on. How strange you must think me, but I can't help it. Don't take to heart anything I say; I feel so confused."

It was many minutes before we began to speak on other matters, and then the conversation changed to my mother.

"She is very anxious to see you," said Gertrude.

"Where is she?" I asked eagerly.

"In Canada, I believe. She left word with her lawyer, Mr. Seymour, of William Street, when she went away, that she was to be telegraphed for the moment you arrived."

"God bless her! I long so much to meet her; she's been the dream of my life. Oh! how I wish she were here."

While we were speaking Mrs. Morgan entered the room.

"O Washington!" she exclaimed, greeting me in a very affectionate manner, "I'm very glad to see you back—very glad indeed. When did you arrive?"

"Thank you. This morning."

"We wondered what had become of you, not having heard from you for so long a time. I'm so delighted to see you here again. Well, how have you been? you're looking very well."

"Very well, indeed. How are you? My stay at the Cape was entirely unexpected; but 'all's well that ends well.' I thought of you all very much, and greatly regretted that I staid so long, and that I was not in Melbourne when the first letter arrived for me."

"You can't imagine," continued Mrs. Morgan, "how deeply sorry we were about that office business. It nearly killed Gertrude, and I don't think she'll ever get over it. Gertrude, my dear, don't sob so. Only to think," she continued, "that that unfortunate man, Mr. Perkins, should have been so wicked as to make that infamous accusation against you. Don't you think she's very much changed?"

Alas! I did think so, but I tried to close my eyes to it and only answered: "Yes, a little."

The change was indeed greater than I had been prepared for. There was an evident loss of stamina, a wasting of the tissues, a sinking of the cheeks, a drooping of the eyes, and a violet shade around them which gave them an unnatural brightness and prominence. Her lips, too, once crimson, were now wan, and the blue veins were clearly traceable on her thin temples. Her teeth had become very white, and wore that brittle, glassy look, which in women frequently heralds and accompanies a decline. She had the worn appearance of middle age, and yet she was not twenty-seven.

But frail and pale and delicate and bloodless though she looked, she was everything to me; and I had the grief of

knowing that I was the cause of this sad change. How gladly would I have given my own health and strength to restore the old hue of vitality and freshness to that fragile oval face which, once bright and glowing with animation, had now a fixed expression of care, sadness, regret, disappointment, resignation, which made me melancholy to gaze upon; but the penetrating eyes of the spirit carried me beyond those of the flesh, and I saw her in the past as well as in the present. I adored her all the more tenderly for the change that had come over her.

Now the sunshine of joy beamed across those lines of sadness, and hope, long deferred, was at length realized. When the shock of surprise and—may I say it?—of delight which at first almost paralyzed her, had passed away, the old animation returned with something more than the old fire, the result of temporary excitement.

“What a wonderful romance that is about yourself, Washington,” said Mrs. Morgan. “Your mother called upon us, and will be so very glad to hear of your return. I’m sure she will come on by the next train after she knows of it.”

“I think I ought to go and see her under the circumstances,” said I, looking to Gertrude for assent.

“You’ll miss her on the road if you do; for she left word with her lawyer to telegraph to her as soon as you came, and Mr. Morgan promised to let him know as soon as he heard of you,” she replied.

“Yes, the romance is wonderful; but, strange to say, you’ve not heard it all yet.”

“Indeed—what more?” and mother and daughter looked at me with fresh amazement.

“Well, simply this, that on my voyage to England, after that terrible affair in Wall Street, I made the acquaintance of a young Englishman named Wade, who invited me to dine with him at his club in London, and there introduced me to his uncle, a Mr. Henry Duncan, who made the third of our party at dinner; and who, it now appears, was no other than my father. I can see him now, mentally, as vividly as I did then physically, and his manner and appearance impressed me, I remember, peculiarly, but exactly how I cannot describe. I

conversed with him on general topics, and particularly about the United States. He asked me what part of the country I came from, and I told him Boston. He looked a little hard at me then; and now that I reflect, I think a faint suspicion must have crossed his mind at that moment, for he said, 'I met with a gentleman of your name in Boston,' and seemed desirous of drawing me out respecting my personal history. Well, Mr. Wade was going, for the sake of sport, to the Cape Colony, and had taken passage by the Australian steamer touching there. As I was bound for Melbourne he induced me to go by the same ship, and after that to interrupt my voyage, and join him in his hunting expedition, and for six months we led a life of perilous adventure in the African bush, camping and shooting together. Then he came on with me to Australia, less than a fortnight after which I received Gertrude's letter, telling me the particulars of the discovery that had been made; and I was acquainting Mr. Wade with the strange story, as a reason for my immediate return, when I found out that he was my own cousin—the son of my father's sister. I was more astonished than ever, as you may imagine, and he was as much so as myself, and has come on with me to New York to see how it will all end."

"What a marvellous train of circumstances!" exclaimed Mrs. Morgan. "You're the hero of as startling a romance as I ever read of"

Further conversation followed on this and other subjects, and then she withdrew, not, however, before saying, "Of course you'll stay with us. I'll have a room prepared for you immediately, and we dine at six, as you know. Mr. Morgan will be so very glad to see you, and I'll send word to him now by the coachman, so that he may telegraph your mother from his office."

The invitation to stay I, of course, gladly accepted.

I was again with the woman I loved. Happy day!

CHAPTER LII.

“I AM HAPPY NOW.”

I would not tell her all that I had thought since we last met, and how those farewell lines of hers, given me on my departure for New York, had prostrated me under a load of grief and doubt and anxiety. Even with the best and truest and purest of women, there is uncertainty, and as much after as before marriage. There is a certain indecision, fickleness, or caprice in human nature, which is liable to show itself at any time; but there are exceptions when feeling becomes definite and a change of feeling almost impossible.

Gertrude was a sincere, honest, generous, warm-hearted girl; frank, susceptible, and afflicted with far less avarice and ambition than most of her sex. Indeed she had thrown both the last entirely aside on my account—a sufficient proof of her disinterestedness and purity of motive. But, after all, might not even she change? Heaven pardon me the suspicion: but can a man be so blind as to live in this purgatory of a world, and mingle with the dross of mankind, without knowing full well that base and selfish motives too often govern it, and that, in the great majority of cases, nearly every thing is sacrificed to what is falsely believed to be interest, but which too often turns out in the end to be moral suicide, carrying with it a train of horrors haunting to the tomb? Not, however, that there was aught savoring of the selfish or the uncharitable in her nature—far from it; although I should have loved her all the same if she had committed murder, or married another man for his money before my return—such was the intensity and ineradicable nature of my love for her. I should have been very sad, of course, if she had done so. In the last event, I might have called for “a pistol and flat candlestick,” and quietly or noisily, as it happened, blown my brains out; but, upon consideration, suicide always appeared to me to be a paltry kind of refuge for a disappointed man, and I should have felt too much regard for the feelings of my friends and the

chambermaid, to undertake the operation. Therefore, although a possibility of such a catastrophe might have existed, its probability would have been very remote.

But why should I reflect upon possibilities and the past? My best and brightest hopes had been realized. All that I yearned and longed and prayed for had been granted me, for the woman I adored was mine.

Ah! the delight, the consolation, the divine influence of requited love! To love and to be loved in return, is the acme of felicity, a heavenly joy, making the earth glorious and existence sweet, just as to love and not to be loved is the bitterest disappointment that can rend the human heart, bringing woe, desolation, often despair. And what death in life is there like to it?

Love! what a potent spell it exerts now and again over poor humanity. Before it every thing fades into insignificance, and a blind idolatry usurps the place of reason. Sublime, generous, ennobling passion! But, after all it is only the few who are really capable of loving. The majority of men and women have no capacity for feeling any thing acutely—no strong feelings, and those they do possess may be acted upon by any one of a considerable number of persons. They have, too, a happy facility of transferring their regard, and are by no means heart-broken when a *contre temps* occurs. It is very different, however, with people endowed with more than ordinary sensibility and depth of feeling. To them an attachment once formed is of vital importance, and blighted love is little short of annihilation.

But it seems to me that I am sermonizing—a grave sin.

“Gertrude, my dear,” I said, tenderly embracing her, “you can hardly imagine how much I have suffered since we parted; and what a sorrowful parting that was! I know that Byron says—

“Man’s love is of man’s life a thing apart,
’T is woman’s whole existence;”

but, oh! it seemed as if it was to me all that the poet ascribed to woman. To speak of myself as love-sick is to use a tame conventional phrase. I was heart-broken and prostrated with disappointment, and when I read those ‘farewell’ lines you

gave me in the sealed package, my cup of agony was filled to overflowing; and if it had not been for a ray of hope shining through the terrible gloom and despondency I could hardly have borne my misery. Oh! what days of silent anguish followed, and how my heart sank within me when I waited, day after day, for a fortnight, in Liverpool, and still no letter came. I was wretched and anxious in the extreme. I told you how I consulted the spiritual 'medium,' and what he said about your sickness. How wonderfully true all that was!"

"Yes, indeed," she said, sadly, and I continued.

"I commenced my voyage towards Australia with a very heavy heart, and I only yielded to Mr. Wade's solicitation for me to remain at the Cape, because I thought I should still get to Melbourne before any letter could reach there—not anticipating such a long stay. But I worshipped you as much, day after day, in those African wilds as I ever did and ever shall do. I nearly fainted with joy and emotion when I read your first letters to me on the day I landed in Australia. How welcome they were—oh! how dearly I prized them—how fervently I kissed them, I cannot tell you. But how sad they made me feel after all! I reproached myself bitterly for delaying on the way, and cried over them in joy and sorrow alternately. They carried comfort to my wearied, anxious spirit, gave me new life, and kindled hope anew. How grateful and delighted I was! And now, O Gertrude! my love, my idol, the yearning desire of those long, long months of absence, which made the heart, if possible, grow fonder, is satisfied, and I am with you once again, a happy man. At least, whatever there is wanting to complete that happiness, I know you won't refuse." And I raised her hand to my lips, and we both smiled as our eyes met in a long and loving gaze.

Then she pillowed her face on my breast, and murmured fondly: "Dearest! I am happy now. Oh! so happy."

What could I do but stoop and kiss her?

* * * * *

The street door opened.

"That's papa," said Gertrude; "he'll be so glad to find you here," and she went into the hall to meet him.

"Papa, dear, Washington has come," she exclaimed, in a

tone of exultation ; and the next moment Mr. Morgan entered the room and shook me warmly by the hand.

“I’m glad to see you back, Washington, very. You must make yourself quite at home. When did you arrive? Great doings about you since you left. You haven’t seen your mother yet, but I’ve telegraphed for her. How have you been? You’re looking well. Bad business that about Perkins—great scoundrel—deceived me completely—very sorry for it—had implicit confidence in him. But he’s dead now, and I’ll do my best to mend matters. You’ll forgive me, I know; won’t you? It wasn’t my fault.”

“Certainly, sir; and I’m grateful to you for all you’ve done for me.”

The old gentleman seemed quite moved with emotion; and there was no doubt about the sincerity of his welcome and good wishes.

It was a novel sensation this meeting, on more than the old terms of friendship, with the father of Gertrude. There was a touching display of warmth and tenderness in his manner, which made me regret that I had ever considered him a harsh judge or severe arbitrator. I saw that he was willing to do all that he could in the future to recompense me for the injury I had suffered in the past.

He shook me by both hands, and then laid his right hand on my shoulder, and made an effort to say more than he did, for he only uttered: “I am glad to see you, my boy, very glad. Consider this your home as long as you like to make it so.”

With a natural curiosity, I was eager to learn all I could about my mother; and although Reginald Wade had described her to me over and over again, I was just as anxious to hear more of her from other lips. So my inquiries were numerous and earnest.

Mrs. Morgan again joined us.

“Mamma,” said Gertrude, “Washington and I have been comparing notes. We’ve been drawing pictures of his mother; he from what his cousin, Mr. Wade, told him, and I from memory. Don’t you think her very handsome?”

“I’m sure she has been. She’s exceedingly prepossessing, and the most lady-like person I think I ever saw. You’ll love

each other very much, I know," she continued, turning to me.

"She has such beautiful black eyes and hair, and such a sweet expression of mouth," said Gertrude, "I'm sure she's very amiable and warm hearted."

"Well, from all that I can understand," said I, after a little more conversation on the subject, "she's a little over the medium height, well made, but inclining to *embonpoint*: nearly a brunette, of entertaining manners, with very good taste in dress, and the son shows a family resemblance."

"Yes; oh! she's very charming indeed," said Gertrude; "I wish you could see her. Father has sent word that you are here to Mr. Seymour, her lawyer, and, having telegraphed her besides, she'll know very soon."

"Then," said I, "I'll be guided by the reply as to whether I go on to meet her or await her here."

After dinner the lawyer called to see me, and expressed his congratulations on my return, and told me he also had telegraphed to my mother. He at the same time made an appointment with me for the following morning at his office, and concluded by saying, "I'll probably have an answer to my message by that time and be able to post you."

For the first time since the difficulty in Wall Street, I went to sleep a happy man at the house in Union Square.

I did not see Reginald Wade till the next morning. Then I called upon him at his hotel—the Metropolitan—and found him in his own room, deep in the mysteries of "yellow-covered literature." Seated in an easy-chair, with one book in his hand and another on the table at his side, he appeared to be enjoying the novelty of a strange dish.

"Well, a pretty fellow you are," said he, rising to welcome me, "not to come and see me before this time. How have you been?"

I explained.

"Lucky fellow," he replied, "I congratulate you."

"Just see what I've got here," and he turned the cover of the book in his hand towards me. Thereon I read the prodigious title, "THE NAIL WITH THE BLOODY HEAD, or THE TERRORS OF A NIGHT," by Methusaleh, author of the "Mangled Baby or The Washerwoman's Revenge," "The Girl in Yel-

low," "The Man in Blue," "The Boy in Green," etc. "And here," lifting the other volume, "The Dead Loafer, or The Great Broadway Mystery," by Jupiter, author of "The Strangled Victim, or Love and Murder," "The Green-Eyed Monster, or the Fatal Struggle," "The Red Spot, or the Miscreant's Doom," etc.

"Alas! my country!" was my exclamation.

"I want to introduce you at my friend's house, if you've no objection," said I, a few minutes later; the family having invited me to do so.

"Not the slightest—I shall be very happy."

"Well, I will call for you at eight."

And after further conversation, I left him to the delights of sensational "literature," and took my way down-town, to keep my appointment with Mr. Seymour, the lawyer.

"Good morning. How d'ye do? very glad to see you," said he; "I've just this instant received a message by telegraph from your mother, and she left Toronto by the ten o'clock train this morning for New-York. She'll be here to-night."

I was overjoyed.

MY MOTHER! how ardently I longed to meet her! Ah! yes, and with what unutterable fondness.

I wanted to meet her at the railway station, but Mr. Seymour said it would be better for me not to do so under the circumstances, and that he and Mr. Morgan had arranged to be in attendance at the Hudson River depot when the train arrived.

That night, at half-past nine, a carriage drove up to the house in Union Square; the bell rang, and a minute afterwards I beheld—

CHAPTER LIII.

AT LAST.

MY MOTHER!	!	!	!	!	!
!	!	!	!	!	!
!	!	!	!	!	!
!	!	!	!	!	!

CHAPTER LIV.

THE LONG EXPECTED MEETING.

At one bound we sprang into each other's arms.

"My child—my child!" she exclaimed, kissing me passionately, and then burst into tears.

"My mother—my dear mother!" I replied, returning the fond embrace. Then she suddenly released me, and looked me full in the face with wild, admiring eyes.

"God bless you, my darling boy!" and we embraced again. It was more like the meeting of lovers after a long separation than of mother and son.

My heart beat very fast, and my excited brain pictured the past with wonderful distinctness. A panorama of my life seemed to present itself at a single glance, and imagination supplied all that memory failed to furnish.

"For this, my dear mother," I said, "I have prayed from childhood, and I always believed the day would come when I should find you. A monitor within me told of a something time would divulge, and encouraged me to look hopefully into the future. Thank heaven, my prayers have been answered, and my great wish is realized. How very glad I am!"

My mother's eyes were fixed intently upon me. They seemed to devour me. Her woman's nature moved her to survey with sensations of pride, joy, anxiety, and maternal love, amounting to ecstasy, her only son, who had been lost to her from early infancy, whom she had never seen since, when pink in babyhood, he lay cradled by her side.

And what a long, dark, mysterious gulf lay between!

We had met in the hall, but now we both entered the parlor. Mr. Morgan and Gertrude were standing near the door, and extended a warm greeting to the new-comer; and then Reginald Wade advanced, saying: "I think we're old friends." My mother gave a sudden start, and grasped his hand with amazement pictured in her looks.

"Why Reginald, this is a surprise!" she exclaimed, "I

thought you were still in Africa. How very glad I am to see you! What a mystery all this seems! Where have you come from—did you come with him?" and she cast a glance towards me.

"You surmise correctly—I did come with him, and entirely on his and your own account. We are old friends and companions, you must know. He was my fellow-huntsman in the bush, whom I mentioned in my letter to you. Don't you remember—Mr. Edmond's?"

"Oh! yes; then he was my own dear boy. How little I thought it."

"The very same; you ought to be proud of him."

"I am, indeed. How wonderful it all is! You're about the last person in the world I should have expected to meet here to-night."

The conversation soon became general upon the one topic, in which I was the central figure, but I could see that my mother was anxious to be alone with me, and after a stay of less than an hour, during which the carriage had remained in waiting, she rose to depart, notwithstanding a pressing invitation from Mrs. Morgan to make her home where she was.

She had already left her baggage and her maid at the Clarendon, whither I accompanied her.

There in her quiet parlor, free from the intrusive gaze of others, she poured out a flood of feeling, and embraced me like a child; and told me the history of her life—her marriage, her bereavement, her desolation, her unhappiness, her suspicions, her separation from her husband, her discovery of his duplicity, her anxious search for me, and the joyful reward that had at length crowned her efforts, and secured the triumph of Right over Wrong.

And I, too, told her of the web of mystery I had ever been striving to unravel—of the vague yearning I felt after my mother, and the belief I entertained that she still lived, and that I was the victim of a wrong which I sanguinely hoped time would remedy—of the long years of speculation, and brooding, and wretchedness I had passed, and how all had come right in the end!

How she wept over the "plain unvarnished tale" of my

youthful sufferings ; the long-continued cruelties of Mrs. Bangs ; the rude hardships of a boy's life at sea ; the bitter experiences of Liverpool ; the thrilling story of the wreck on the Newfoundland coast ; the false accusation of the cashier at the bank in Wall Street ; the terrible consequences which that entailed upon me ; my subsequent sorrows and perilous adventures ; my eventual justification by the thief of my reputation ; and, finally, the discovery of the priceless object for which I had prayed so long.

She clasped me to her heart with all a mother's love and the wild fervor of a new-found joy, and the broad belt of time between the day when she had lost me and now, which ere this had been marked only with desolation, bloomed like a garden before her vision. The rosy flush of pride and transport mantled her face, and her eyes glowed with the fire of a feeling which till now had never burned so brightly.

"Where was my father when you last heard of him?" I inquired.

"In England. He'd just arrived to see his grandfather, Lord Huntingdon, who is lying dangerously ill at Huntingdon Park, Gloucester. I only received the letter telling me this two days ago. He's a very old man, and Bishop Duncan being his only surviving son, your father will be heir presumptive to the title after his death. So, you see, you have a chance of becoming an Earl before you die."

I did see it, but having no desire whatever to inherit a coronet, I treated the subject with indifference.

"My dear Mother," said I, "how came you to find out the deception my father had practised upon you in the first instance."

"Quite by accident," she replied, "Your father happened to leave a travelling desk in which he kept some of his private papers unlocked one day, and curiosity tempted me to look over them. There I found a memorandum book giving the whole history of the case in a few lines, with the dates, circumstances, and names. Much as the discovery surprised me, I saw through it all at a glance. My child had not died, but been taken from me so that I might be childless, and that your father might inherit the whole of my property. I was, of course, furious, but

had presence of mind enough to take a copy of the entries in the book, which were all on the first two pages. This copy I put away, and when your father came home to dinner, I held up that book before his eyes, and charged him with what he had done. He appeared thunderstruck, and sat down in a chair without uttering a word, while drops of perspiration gathered on his brow. When he spoke it was in a hoarse voice. 'Harriett,' said he, 'You have no business to look over my private papers and draw your own conclusions from them.' 'Is not every word you have here written, true?' I asked. 'I decline answering any questions from you on the subject,' he replied, angrily, and then suddenly rising, said, 'Here, give me that book,' and, after a struggle, he wrested it from me.'

"'I leave this house to-night, sir, for ever,' I said, and I immediately dressed and packed a few things, and, ordering a cab, drove with my maid to my Uncle Edward's, in Bryanston Square, where I remained until we sailed for Boston. The entries I had copied from the book served to guide me in making the investigations I did after my arrival, and the result, my dear, darling boy, I see before me."

"Do you know," I said, "that since I received those few lines from you at Melbourne, I have been all the time trying to picture you in my mind from the descriptions given me by Reginald Wade, and, since I returned, from those of Mrs. Morgan and Gertrude! but I must say that all my imaginings have been completely eclipsed by the original. So far as leading physical characteristics are concerned, I was pretty correct, but in the filling up of the outlines, I was deficient. It is true, as I was told, that you are a little over the medium height, well made, but inclining to *embonpoint*, and nearly a brunette, and that your son is not the most unlike you of any one in the world—but there is something about you so far beyond what mere words can describe, that I am perfectly enchanted at such a bright realization of my hopes."

"Well, I'm sure I've found a very complimentary young man in my son. What next?" and she laughed. "Well, when will you be ready to go with me to England?"

"Not till after my marriage, I think."

“Marriage! With whom?”

“Gertrude Morgan.”

“Surely not. She looks at least ten years older than you, and very delicate.”

“What of that? It is true she is about four years my elder, but her looks were fresh and healthful before that accusation was made against me at the bank. We were engaged to be married then, and I am prepared to marry her now, and I would marry her on her death-bed. All the sacrifice has been on her side. I was a poor ship’s cabin-boy, who merely did his best to comfort and rescue her in a trying and terrible period. My claim upon her, even for gratitude, was very slight, and yet she paved my way to worldly fortune, and then gave me her hand and heart, and would have married me as willingly after I had been branded as a thief as before, or as she would now, when I stand before the world righteous, vindicated, and triumphant. No, my marriage with Gertrude Morgan is not impossible; it is inevitable. I never loved any other woman, and she is indispensable to my happiness.”

“I’m surprised at what you say. I was not aware you were still engaged, although I heard you had been; that alters the case entirely, of course. But I think her state of health warrants a postponement of the marriage.

“Upon that point,” I said, “my mind is made up. I will have no further postponement than she may suggest.”

“I admire your spirit and constancy; but I think your choice may prove unfortunate.”

“It can only prove unfortunate in the event of her early death, and if she is to die, I would rather deplore her as my wife than my betrothed. Moreover, marriage I know will prolong her life. She has simply pined away, and the true way to alleviate disease is to remove its cause.”

It was late that night—very late before I returned to the house in Union Square. But the light was still burning in the hall, and one of the servants remained on the alert for me, and as I passed up stairs, Gertrude came out of her room and kissed me good-night.

CHAPTER LV.

ANOTHER SCENE IN WALL STREET.

"You must come down and see your old friends at the office," said Mr. Morgan. "They'll all be very glad to meet you."

I cheerfully accepted the invitation, and the next morning walked down with him to his banking house in Wall Street—that thoroughfare so busy by day and so deserted by night, which I had known so well in the days that were no more.

The old brass sign at the doorway, bearing the inscription, "Edward Morgan and Co." was still at number 45, and the building seemed to have undergone no change since the day I left it, as I supposed, for ever.

Mr. Morgan was a banker of the old school, who did a strictly legitimate business as distinguished from a speculative one, and he assured me that he never took "a flyer in stocks" in his life, and that by their copartnership articles his firm could not speculate to the extent of a dollar. He was not a broker, and took no orders from speculators to buy or sell stocks on a margin, although he never refused to buy on commission for his customers, who wanted to pay for what they bought outright, nor to sell when they actually held the securities they sold, but he would never sell "short" for anybody. It was not in his line of business, he would say, and those who dealt with Edward Morgan and Co. as bankers had to go elsewhere to find their brokers.

Mr. Morgan's partner, Mr. Fipps, who was now an invalid, and seldom at the office, was equally averse to carrying stocks or doing a speculative business of any kind, so the house had the reputation of being one of the strongest and most conservative in the Street.

Country banks and bankers had confidence in the house, and hundreds of them kept accounts there, and people seldom took the precaution of getting its checks certified. It always had a large amount of money loaned on stock collaterals, but

it invariably exacted wide margins, and insisted on the borrowers keeping them good, failing which the loans were promptly called in, and borrowers of doubtful credit were refused when they applied for fresh loans.

Hence it went on its way prospering. Panics in the stock market never involved it in losses any more than a rise brought it profits, although a sharp calling in of loans generally heralded a heavy fall in the stock market.

Mr. Morgan paused for an instant at the threshold of his office and remarked—

“Now that you are about to enter this office again, Washington, let me tell you that you can do so as a partner if you like.”

“Thank you. I’m very much obliged to you,” and I followed him into his private office.

All who had known me recognized me at a glance as I passed through, and there was the silence broken by whispers which the newspapers describe (in a parenthesis) as sensation.

Mr. Johnson, the same with whom I had boarded during my clerkship, was the first to come forward. He had succeeded Mr. Perkins as cashier.

“Why, Washington,” he exclaimed, “how are you? I’m very glad to see you, and so are all the old hands here I’m sure—very. I heard you were back, and we were all anxious to see you. Mrs. Johnson wished me to give her kind regards to you, and say that she would be pleased to see you at the house if you’d like to call.”

“Thank you, thank you,” I replied, “I shall be most happy,” and then my other fellow clerks of former days gathered round and congratulated me warmly on my safe return and improved appearance—for travelling and the open air life I had led had put more vitality into my frame than I had ever known before, and my muscular system had been largely developed by exercise, so that I really presented an unusually robust and athletic appearance.

“Mr. Johnson,” said Mr. Morgan, in a voice which was evidently intended to reach the ears of all the clerks in the office, “I think it proper after all that has occurred to say that Washington returns to this office entirely exculpated from the

false and damnable charge made against him by Mr. Perkins—the only redeeming feature in whose character lay in his death-bed confession,—and I have here before you all to tender him my very humble apologies for having ever believed the false accusation, and to inform you that I have such perfect confidence in his integrity that I have offered him a partnership in this house, and, further, gladly consented to his marriage with my only daughter.”

The sensation produced by this short speech was very great, but it would have been still greater had not my engagement with Gertrude while in the bank been generally understood. The proposed partnership was, however, a surprise to them, but they appeared to approve of it, for immediately one of the boldest of the employees shouted, “Hip, hip!” following which he and all the others cried “Hurrah!” three times, to the evident delight of Mr. Morgan, who displayed an enthusiasm, which, in his case, I had never witnessed before.

“Of course, Washington,” remarked Mr. Morgan, after Mr. Johnson and the clerks had retired to their respective desks, “in offering you a partnership here I don’t want to hamper your own free will in any way. You’ll have to go to England with your mother to settle this family matter of yours, and you won’t be able to attend to business while you’re away, but I wish you to understand that you can have a partnership in this house whenever you’re prepared for it, and in the meantime I’ll give you a check for ten thousand dollars to pay the expenses of your wedding trip to Europe.”

“Oh, you are too good!” I exclaimed.

“Not a bit,” was Mr. Morgan’s reply, as he wrote the check, and as he handed it to me he said, “Treat her well, that is all I ask, and that I know you will do.” Then our hands were clasped in silence, while tears welled up into my eyes.

CHAPTER LVI.

I VISIT THE HUB OF THE UNIVERSE.

On the following evening our wedding-day was fixed. Wednesday, the fourth of October would see us married. Three weeks and a few hours had yet to elapse before I could call Gertrude my own.

Meanwhile we all went together to West-Point, for New York was empty of its butterflies of fashion, who were still frittering away their lives in Newport, Saratoga, and elsewhere, and the streets were monotonously dull and the weather hot; and there at Cozzens' we caught pleasant glimpses of the beautiful Hudson, and happy faces beamed around us, and night after night

“Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell.”

“Lucky fellow—I congratulate you,” were the words of Reginald Wade, still fresh in my memory; and I felt that I really was a lucky fellow, and that I really might be congratulated. With my mother and my betrothed by my side, I felt that I was the happiest man living, so great was the contrast between former misery and present felicity.

Sweet is the memory of departed joys—a platitude I admit—but heaven save us if we cannot recall the glowing past in language endeared to us by familiarity. I am no respecter of the canons of criticism or conventional rules; I am opposed to barren uniformity in any thing and every thing, and I think the mere example of eccentricity—another name for non-conformity—advantageous in an age like the present, when the tendency is to suppress individuality, and convert men into machines. I like to think as I like, and to say what I think, whether I think rightly or wrongly, and whosoever is disposed to contest my moral right to do so is retrogressive, and opposed to the advancement of civilization and the dissemination of truth. I am one of those who have no dread of the tyranny of

opinion, more potent than law though it may be; for unless we live in an atmosphere of perfect social freedom, it is my belief that existence is not worth having, and I would sooner be a hippopotamus or a catfish than a human being, if I had to bow to the yoke of social despotism, virtuous and immaculate as I am. My individuality must assert itself, or I must perish with it.

I looked forward to my marriage-day with unspeakable delight, and every morning I awoke to a new sense of joy, just as before, the dawn of the days had only brought me renewed misery. And how much we feel our woe or weal when we emerge from the oblivion of slumber into the consciousness of reality! How we sicken with thoughts of pain while the bitter cup of disappointment and regret is again quaffed! or how we are moved with pride, pleasure, and ecstasy, as the case may be! If I am oppressed with a great grief, spare me the moment of awaking; but if I have a great joy, then welcome, welcome the light of each new day!

I had been looking forward to a visit to the scenes of my childhood since my arrival, and the time had now come for it, if I was ever to make it.

Gertrude reluctantly consented to my going for two or three days, and my mother, at her own request, accompanied me to Boston, where, at the Tremont House, I registered our names thus: *Mrs. Harriet Duncan, Mr. Washington Edmonds Duncan.*

"I'm sorry they gave you that name *Washington*," remarked my mother, when I told her how I had written it. "It sounds so dreadfully American."

"The name I intended to give you was your father's—Henry, but you hadn't been baptized when you were taken away from me, and Mrs. Wilkins told me that she never had you christened, so you've never been baptized—only think of that, my dear."

"Well," said I, "as I've borne the name of Washington Edmonds all my life, the best compromise I can now make is to call myself Washington Edmonds Duncan, which to please you I shall sign W. E. Duncan. You must remember, mother, I'm an American, and am proud of both the name and fame of Washington."

"I don't think so at all," she remarked, "your parents are English, and the circumstance of your being born in this country was an accident. The simile is not elegant, I know, but if you were born in a stable, would that make you a horse?"

"Your reasoning, my dear mother," I replied, "is based on an exploded theory. We are all creatures of accident. But it is sufficient for me to know that I am an American born. I've had some very hard times here, it is true, but my flag is the star spangled banner. I belong to 'the land of the brave and the home of the free.' I'm, in fact, 'a Boston Boy,' deny it who can. Don't imagine for a moment, however, that I've any prejudice against England. I like the country and the people very much indeed. It is my Fatherland, and I respect it as such. I shall be just as happy in England as I should be here, if not happier, and I have little doubt that I shall say with you, after I have had more experience of the old country, 'England, with all thy faults, I love thee still.'"

"Yes, my darling, I know you will. As your mother's son you could not do otherwise."

Leaving my mother at the hotel on the morning after our arrival at the "Hub," I went alone to the office of Mr. John Fowler, the lawyer who had advertised for me, to announce myself as the missing individual.

"Is Mr. Fowler within?" I asked of a gentleman with iron-gray hair, closely trimmed whiskers, and sallow complexion whom I saw seated at a desk, smoking a cigar, in the room on whose door that gentleman's sign was displayed.

"That is my name, sir," he replied coldly, "what can I do for you?"

"You have advertised for Washington Edmonds, I see, and, as I am the person referred to, you can account for my visit."

"Is that so, my good sir, you surprise me. When did you get here?"

"I arrived this morning."

"Well, sir, there has been quite a sensation about you, and a more extraordinary romance I never heard of than the circumstances surrounding your history from your birth up. But the matter, I may say, has passed out of my hands. Mr. Morgan, of New York, wrote me a letter, telling me that you were

living, and had gone to Australia, and that he would communicate with you. Since then, your mother and her uncle, Mr. Edward Beresford, have seen Mr. Morgan and his family, and ascertained a great deal about you, and letters were sent to you at Melbourne by them, I believe, giving all the leading facts in the case. Did you receive them?"

"Yes."

"Have you been to New York yet?"

"Yes; I arrived nearly a fortnight ago."

"And have met your mother?" he queried.

"Yes. She came on to Boston with me."

"Oh! indeed. Then, sir, you know as much as I do, and a little more, probably. We have taken all the testimony that there is to be had in the case, and your mother has the necessary affidavits to prove your identity. How do you feel after it all?—glad, I hope."

"Yes. Delighted, as you may well imagine."

"Well, sir, if I can be of any assistance to you here call upon me"—following which we shook hands warmly and parted.

From the lawyer's office I walked rapidly through an intricate network of narrow and winding streets, yclept cow-paths, in the direction of the Medical College, till I reached Washington Street—a thoroughfare which, when a small boy, I had vainly supposed to have been called after me. My natural curiosity made me anxious to see the building and its inmates once more, although my association connected with it were of the most disagreeable character; but I thought that time might have tempered the habitual fury of Mrs. Bangs, and that the religion of which she once spoke so much might at length have exerted a divine influence upon her crabbed nature. "At any rate," I said to myself, "if my calling does no good, it can do no harm, and I shall be glad to change my opinion of the old lady for the better. Moreover, as I am going to see Kate Wilkins in the afternoon, it will be something to tell her about. I most certainly ought not to leave Boston without seeing Mr. and Mrs. Bangs, whatever my feelings towards *her* may be."

CHAPTER LVII.

A TRAGEDY IN THE STONE BUILDING.

At length I reached the door of the gloomy stone building, known as the Medical College, and rang the bell.

It was opened by Mr. Bangs—a prematurely old man, gray and bent and careworn, with deep lines furrowing his pale and anxious countenance, but still the same Mr. Bangs with whom my boyhood had been so intimately associated. He gazed at me with a vacant look of wonder, bordering on stupor, and then exclaimed in a hollow voice, as I stood silent before him, while he still held the knob of the open door,

“Why, Washington, that’s you.”

“You’re right,” I replied, “I’m back again at last like a piece of bad money, but better late than never. How have you been all this time?”

“How have I been?” he replied sadly, “very poorly, very poorly, indeed.”

“Not well—eh? I’m sorry to hear that. How’s your mother? Is she living?”

“Living? Yes. Did you think she was dead?” he asked mournfully, and he eyed me with the same vacant stare and sorrowful visage that first confronted me.

“I have to keep very quiet,” he continued, “because I’m afraid of softening of the brain. The members have given me an assistant in the library, so I’ve not much to do now. Oh! Washington, the ghost of Mr. Flint has haunted me ever since you went away. He comes to me by night. I see him by day. I see the potash and the boiler and the dead body always before me. I cannot get away from them. They are chained to me. Oh! Washington, what made me do as I did? I’ve been expecting the police, but they haven’t come yet. I’d have made a public confession of my crime only for the fear of losing my situation, but I don’t know how much longer I shall be able to bear it. Oh, Washington, its terrible! Don’t you see how old I’ve grown—how gray—how

broken down—how utterly God-forsaken and almost helpless. Washington, it's remorse—remorse. Oh, the pangs of conscience, how hard they are to bear—well may it be said that conscience makes cowards of us all. You won't say anything, will you? Don't, I pray, or I'm undone. There will be nothing for me after that but the poorhouse. Somebody has been enquiring for you, do you know it?"

I answered in the affirmative.

"They came here" he continued—"a lady, who said she was your mother, among them—and asked me and my mother to tell them everything we knew about you, but I told them we didn't know what had become of you—whether you'd run away or been drowned or what. They were all just as excited as they could be, and I guess I shall never see folks take on so again about any one."

"Your mother"—said I—"I'd like to see her."

"Well," said he, "come into the house," and he closed the door, and led the way with a feeble step down the narrow passages which connected the building with the librarian's residence.

Mrs. Bangs, hearing the sound of footsteps, came to the kitchen door as I approached, and looking more withered than ever, fixed her stony eyes upon me in the most unsympathetic manner imaginable. She showed surprise, but it was coupled with aversion. She seemed to be mentally saying to herself, "Why, here is that wretch, Washington, back again."

"Well, Washington, what do you want?" she asked, without extending her hand or showing any sign of welcome, "we've had trouble enough with you, and hope you don't mean to give us any more."

"No, Mrs. Bangs," I replied, firmly, "I've no wish to give you any more trouble, no wish even to see you again, for all my recollections of you are calculated to make me feel bitterly towards you. You were always cruel, hateful, inhuman to me, but curiosity impelled me to call. Let me assure you I have no desire to inform against Mr. Bangs or yourself, for murdering Mr. Flint. I would not consign even you to the gallows, or yet to a penitentiary. I forgive you all the wrongs you in-

flicted upon me when I was a helpless boy—a child, I may say, entirely at your mercy—but I can never forget.”

“Oh, mother, mother,” cried Mr. Bangs, frantically, “why did you speak so to Washington, now that he’s come back. Don’t you know that my bread, my liberty, I may say, my life are in his hands?” Then turning to me, he said, with tears in his eyes, “Oh, Washington, don’t mind her—don’t mind her. You know what she is. She was always so.”

“Robert,” she cried angrily, with her voice pitched almost into a scream, and with her withered face flushing with excitement, “how dare you speak in that way of me, your mother? What do you mean by bringing that fiend again into the house to breed disturbance?”

It was the old story. Age had not softened the vixen in this woman’s nature. She was as much a virago as of yore, and I regretted having sought an interview with her.

I was turning to leave when up ran from the direction of the building a small dog that Mr. Bangs had given to him about a couple of years before I left this hospitable roof.

He knew me at a glance, and jumped and capered about and licked my hands with a genuine affection. Never had I seen a dog welcome his master back after a long absence, so gladly before. Poor old “Ned!” he seemed overwhelmed with delight, and he did not cease his caresses even when Mrs. Bangs cried out, fiercely, “Ned—lie down—lie down, sir.” No, Ned, for once, was not to be put down in that way, and he uttered plaintive little whining cries, as he looked up to me, at having his happiness thus interrupted. “Will you give me, or sell me this dog,” I asked, addressing Mr. Bangs.

“No, Sir, you shan’t take him,” exclaimed his mother, rushing at the faithful animal and carrying him to a dark closet in which she threw him. “You shan’t do anything of the sort with our dog, and I think it’s very audacious for you to attempt such a thing as taking him away.”

“Mrs. Bangs,” I said, “I leave you with the happy reflection that there is not another woman in Boston or the whole world like you. You are so pre-eminently hateful and generally disagreeable and unjust that I should wish my worst enemy no worse fate than to have to live with you. I really pity

your son, and I bitterly regret the years of misery I suffered within these walls."

"Don't mention Flint to anybody, will you?" said Mr. Bangs, earnestly and anxiously, with an imploring look, "and don't mind what my mother says—you know her temper and her tongue."

This was the signal for a volley of abuse from Mrs. Bangs, under which her son quailed. No wonder, I reflected, that he was threatened with softening of the brain.

"I should think such a fine gentleman as you are might pay the bill that's due us for your board," ejaculated the old woman. This was the stale taunt of long ago in a new form.

"How much is it?" I asked.

"Nearly six hundred dollars, with interest," she replied.

"Give me a receipt for it and I'll give you the money now, or stay, I want no receipt."

I took six bank bills for a hundred dollars each out of my portmonnaie and threw them on the table.

"There," said I, "we are quits now. Let me hear no more of that."

"How did you come by all this money, I should like to know?" was Mrs. Bangs only response to this, as she counted the notes.

"That is my business," I replied, "and I decline listening to any more insulting remarks from you. If you were a man I should possibly knock you down, but as you are a woman your sex protects you."

Hereupon I walked towards the stone building, followed by Mr. Bangs, who was in terror, exclaiming: "Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

A loud scream from Mrs. Bangs caused me to turn round, and at the same moment the body of her son fell to the floor with a heavy thud, his throat deeply gashed with a razor, which he held tightly grasped in his hand. The blood spurted forth with such force that I saw at a glance the jugular vein was cut and the windpipe severed. The man was insensible when he fell, and died almost instantly.

"The fool has gone and done it at last," cried Mrs. Bangs, with more anger than regret. "He has rushed into the pre-

sence of his Maker unprepared, and it's all through you, Washington—all through you. I knew you'd bring trouble, and here it is. Oh, my poor Bob, poor Bob, why did you do such a foolish thing? Oh, that wretch! that wretch!"

While we were both stooping over the body, the dog came bounding out of the closet, and seeing his master bleeding on the ground, uttered a succession of howls, and then began to lick his face.

"Leave this building at once," commanded Mrs. Bangs, turning savagely upon me, "or I'll have you arrested," and glad to escape from the terrible scene, I passed into the street through the private door, which she shut after me with a bang.

CHAPTER LVIII.

KATE WILKINS ONCE MORE.

From the stone building I returned to the hotel direct, and told my mother the dreadful story. She listened in mute astonishment, and then said, "My dear, what made you go to that horrid place? I'm very sorry, indeed, that you went. Why didn't you tell me that you were going? You know they were always very unkind, and even cruel, to you."

"I went," I replied, "to gratify a natural curiosity, and I didn't wish to make you uneasy by saying anything on the subject. Moreover, when I left the hotel I hadn't determined whether I should go there or not. You know I told you I was going to see Mr. Fowler and Kate Wilkins, and look round generally, and the reason why I didn't ask you to come with me was that the evening before you had said you preferred my going alone—that you didn't wish to be excited by fresh interviews."

"And you say this Mrs. Bangs is a Methodist," observed my mother, after she had made a few other remarks in relation to my visit. "I always thought the Methodists professed to be even better than other people."

“Pray don’t blame the Methodists, my dear mother,” I replied, “I have a great respect for them as a religious body. Mrs. Bangs is the woman she is in spite of her religion, and not because of it. She would have been no better if she had been connected with any other sect. Some of the most devout Christians, and noble, upright characters I ever met were Wesleyans, and I wish you distinctly to understand that my prejudice against her—for which, as you know, I have good reason—does not extend to Methodism. I firmly believe that she would have been a still more hateful and cruel creature than she was to me but for her church-going, and the foundation of her evil nature lay in her bad, ungovernable and furious temper, to which everything else about her was subservient. To hold up Mrs. Bangs as a specimen Methodist, would be, indeed, unjust, for I don’t believe that there is another Methodist like her either in the New World or the Old. I certainly never saw her equal, for that matter, on the face of the earth. The Methodists, it is true, are a good deal more intolerant of other religions, than they should be, but they have done a vast amount of good on both sides of the Atlantic in promoting the spiritual, and to some extent, the social welfare of the poorer classes, and I’m sorry that Mrs. Bangs and Methodism should be associated together.”

I did not go that day in search of Kate Wilkins, the event at the Medical College having, to use a homely phrase, quite upset me. But on the next morning, after I had read the daily papers, and seen therein a brief report of the “suicide, by cutting his throat with a razor, of the librarian of the Medical College, who had been laboring under mental depression for some time past,” I took a train which, in a few minutes, carried me within two miles of the village of Green.

I succeeded in prevailing upon a store-keeper in the vicinity of the railway station to give me the use of an old rockaway, that I saw in an adjoining shed, to carry me to my destination.

“I guess I can accommodate you,” said he. “Here Jack”—calling to the man outside—“harness the mare, and drive the gentleman over to Green.”

In a few minutes I was being driven over a sandy road in the

desired direction. I remembered nothing of the locality, but, as we entered the village, I caught sight of an old mill, worked by water power, which seemed familiar to me.

"What's that?" I asked of the driver, pointing to the building.

"That's a woollen mill," was the reply, and we drove on.

"Stop here," said I, "and wait till I come back. I won't be long."

"All right, boss, but aren't you going to pay me before you go?"

"Certainly, if you wish it—how much?"

"Two dollars."

I paid him, and walked alone to a cross-road, in which I saw several wooden cottages.

"Where does Kate Wilkins live?" I asked of an old man, with a stoop and gray hair, whom I met walking with a stick, upon which he leant for support.

"Kate Wilkins," he exclaimed, looking up with surprise, "why, that's my old woman. Say, are you little Wash, as used to live wi' us? I sort o' recognize you, if you air."

"Why, is it possible, Mr. Wilkins, that you recognize me after all these years?"

"Aye, that I do, sonny," he replied, "Give us your hand, I'm right glad to see you back i' Green. Why, Kate's head 'll be turned upside down when she sees you. She's been talking about you ever since they took you away. Come along wi' me, my son. Where hast been all this time—eh? We thought we'd hear no more of you in this world. Plenty of folks have been here looking after you, but we couldn't tell 'em a thing about where they'd find you."

The old man was walking rapidly down the road, in which stood the cottages, talking as he went, and I kept pace with him.

"Where is the house?" I asked.

"Don't be impatient," said he, "here it is," and he turned sharply into the gateway of a weather-beaten cottage, partly overrun with creeping plants and with a small garden patch in front. He held the gateway open for me and then led the way up the foot-path to the door. "Kate," said he, "Kate," al-

most before he entered, "Here's Wash——, here's Washington. Come and see your little Wash. I guess you won't know him a bit."

A handsome and portly woman of a little more than fifty years, dropped the work she was at and ran towards me. I knew the face at a glance, although I had a very faint recollection of it before. In a moment she had folded me in her arms and kissed me.

"Oh, my dear boy, where did you come from?" she asked. "Where have you been, that we heard nothing of you ever since you left the Medical College? Have you seen your mother?—she's been down here."

"Yes," said I, "she came on with me to Boston."

"Well, Washington, I can't tell you how very glad I am to see you, looking so well, too. It quite does my heart good. What a fraud that father of yours was to do as he did? You know everything has been found out, I suppose?"

"Yes, I've been told all about it," I replied, "and I'm of course pleased that the mystery has been unravelled."

"But for that nurse of yours," continued Kate, "your father would never have done what he did—never in the world, but I guess he's sorry enough for it now. It was such a mean—such an unfatherly thing to do, but, as I told my husband at the time, I suspected as much. I knew there was something under the surface that oughtn't to have been. Have you seen the nurse?"

"No," said I, "have you?"

"Yes, she's living in Boston. She's Mrs. Chittenden now. Her first husband died not long after she married him, and she's living with her second in North Street; number 22 you'll find her at. She told me all about it, and so did her unmarried sister, who was the girl as I saw in the carriage on the night your father gave you to me. A thousand dollars reward was offered by your mother, or her relations—I don't know which—for information about it, and that's how they came to turn informants. Your mother must be real glad to have found you. How did it happen?"

I told her, and gave her an outline of my career after leaving the stone building, but made no mention of the suicide of Mr. Bangs on the previous day.

"Ah, she was a hard, cruel old creature to you, was that Mrs. Bangs. My heart bled for you when I had to leave you with her, and as for her impudence to me, I never heard anything like it before."

I continued the narrative of my adventures, and she exclaimed: "What a wonderful life you have led, Washington. It makes me think of some of those stories I used to read when I was a girl."

"How are your children?" I asked.

"Ah!" she replied, "I've only two sons and a daughter living. One—Richard—has settled out West, somewhere in Indiana, as a farmer, and the other—James—is living at home. He works in the factory in the village, and if you'd come an hour sooner you'd have found him at his dinner. He'll be very sorry to miss seeing you. You must stop at the factory on your way back, and ask for him. My daughter Kitty was married last fall, and is living in Cambridge."

I drew three hundred dollars in gold—with which I had prepared myself—from my pocket, and said: "Before I go I'll give you this. It may be of some use to you, and remember that so long as I can help you, you shall never know what it is to want a dollar. Now I'll say good-bye, and God bless you."

"God bless you, my dear," responded Kate, with tears in her eyes, throwing her arms round my neck again and kissing me. "I'm sorry you're going, but I thank you for this money as you can spare it, because it will be of great use to us, for my husband hasn't been able to do much for a long time—his health is so poor."

"Good-bye, good-bye, and God bless you, if you won't stay to supper," said the old man Wilkins, rising from the chair on which he had been seated during the interview, "and thank you for your handsome present. We haven't seen so much money before." Then he shook me affectionately by the hand, and so did Kate, after which she again kissed me and followed me to the garden gate, while the old man walked on with me in the direction of the mill, where I saw the playmate of my childhood and greeted him, and he me, in a spirit of brotherly love.

Then followed another parting and another promise to return to the cottage in which I had passed my infancy, and it was not until nearly two hours had elapsed from the time of my leaving the rockaway that I re-entered it and drove away towards the railway station, while old Wilkins waved his stick, and his son—a strapping fellow of about twenty-seven—waved his hat after the departing vehicle, and in the distance I saw my foster-mother coming up the road and fluttering something white in the air by way of benediction.

CHAPTER LIX.

THE BOSTON NURSE.

Before leaving Boston on the following day I called on Mrs. Chittenden at the address given me by Kate Wilkins, and found that interesting female in the room which she occupied with her husband—who, I discovered, was a car conductor—engaged in the laudable occupation of ironing the family linen.

“I hope I don’t intrude, Mrs. Chittenden,” I said, as she opened the door on the second floor, at which I had been told to knock, “but Kate Wilkins sent me here. Do you know her?”

“Yes, sir. Is it about that child?”

“I, Mrs. Chittenden, am that child!” was my reply.

“Bless me, you don’t say so. Come in. How is it you got back here? We all supposed you dead and gone long ago. Are you sure you’re the son of your mother?”

“I want no flippant remarks from you on that subject,” said I stiffly.

“Oh, gracious, if you’re going to be offended I won’t talk to you at all.”

“I simply called,” I said, “out of curiosity to see the woman who assisted my father in deceiving my mother with respect to my death, and to hear what you have to say.”

“Well,” she remarked, “for that matter I’ve nothing to say. The gentleman, Mr. Duncan, sent for me to his hotel and told me that he wished to obtain a dead child and to get a living one put out to nurse somewhere. I got him the dead child from the hospital, and he paid me well for my trouble, and I sent my sister with his baby in a carriage when he went to find a nurse for it. It was the strangest thing I’d ever known of, but I was told to ask no questions, and I didn’t. From the fortnight after the dead child was buried until I saw your mother a few months ago, when I applied about the advertisement offering the thousand dollars reward, I’d heard nothing more about the affair, and never dreamt it would be brought up again. I hesitated about giving the information, but my husband told me not to lose the chance of making a thousand dollars, so I swore before the lawyers to all I knew. If I’d known what it was at the time I got the dead child I’d never have done it, I can tell you that—not for anything the gentleman would have given me. But I guess it’s all right now, isn’t it?”

The affair evidently did not trouble her conscience much, for a smile lighted up her large fat face, and she seemed to think that “all’s well that ends well.” It required no keen insight into character to see that she was a naturally unscrupulous and evil disposed woman, and without either religion or principle to control her impulses.

“All that you said in your affidavit, I suppose, is true,” I remarked.

“Yes,” she replied rather indignantly. “May God strike me dead if it isn’t, but you’ve no business to ask such questions, and I won’t answer any more of them. Besides, I’ve my work to do.”

“Very well, Mrs. Chittenden, I’ve nothing further to ask you. Good day,” and I took my way down-stairs again.

CHAPTER LX.

ANCHORED AT LAST.

Several times during the brief period I was in Boston I wrote lovingly to Gertrude, and almost as frequently I received equally loving words from her, and she was never absent from my thoughts.

I was delighted when the hour came for me to return, and when I landed with my mother from the Ferry-boat at West-Point, Gertrude met me under the shadow of the cliffs at the river side and welcomed me back with joy. I was happy, indeed, to see the hue of health returning to her faded cheeks and gladly anticipated her complete recovery, to the end that we might enjoy life together, for without her I felt that mine would be but a sorrowful blank.

The long wished-for morning which was to seal my fate at length came. It broke bright and fair after nearly a week of wet and cloudy weather—a good omen, as I thought. Nature seemed to brush away her tears, and smile upon the union of two loving souls.

I uttered thanks to God for being spared to see this day, and I seemed to stand on the threshold of a new and beautiful life.

How gloriously the sun shone, and how merrily the birds twittered among the branches of the trees in the Square, and what a happy feeling of exultation filled my soul! I rejoiced, and the world seemed to rejoice with me.

One's wedding-day ought always to be delightful to look back upon. With me it is the most cherished and pleasant memory of my life.

Gertrude never looked more lovely, I thought, than on this joyous morning; and when she appeared, robed in white silk, and crowned with a wreath of orange-blossom, I saw how well her bridal dress became her. She was calm but animated, and gladness beamed in her countenance. We had known each other too long and too well to be much excited or flurried

at the near prospect of our marriage ceremony. We accepted the event as the natural result of antecedent circumstances, and were not disposed to be specially demonstrative on the occasion.

Young people who marry after short courtships sometimes hardly know whether they are standing on their head or their heels on their wedding day. But Gertrude and I were philosophers in our way.

My mother had become perfectly reconciled to the match, since I had fully explained the state of affairs to her, and she had presented the bride with some valuable gifts, of which there was a large collection arranged in one corner of the parlor.

Never having been married before, as the reader is aware, I took the precaution of reading the marriage service twice during the morning, and fixed the irrevocable "I will" distinctly in my mind. Having thus "crammed" myself, I felt master of the situation and equal to any emergency.

Reginald Wade was to be my groomsman, and he came to the house in Union Square at half-past twelve, to accompany me to Grace Church, and expressed his surprise to find me in full evening dress.

"Is that the way you get yourselves up for a wedding here?" he asked, surveying me from head to foot.

"Yes," said I, "this is strictly *a la mode*."

"In that case," he continued, "I shall astonish the natives with my blue frock-coat, white waistcoat, light trowsers, fancy neck-tie, and lavender kids; but I have the consolation of knowing that this is the correct thing in England, whatever it may be here. If a man went to a wedding there, looking like a stick of black sealing-wax, people would think he'd called on his way home from a funeral."

"You'll do," said I, "and you certainly look more appropriately dressed for a wedding than I do; but the custom of the country makes the law, and we are slaves of fashion."

"You'll go in the same carriage with my mother, I suppose," said I.

"Then how are you going?" he asked, in surprise.

"I'm going with the bride's mother, and the bride will go with her father."

“That’s how you do it—eh? With us the groom and groomsman go together, and meet the bride at the church.”

“Never mind,” said I, “what matter, so long as you’re happy?”

I thought Gertrude had never looked more lovely than she did on this her wedding morning, for the excitement of the event gave a glow to her features, which was decidedly becoming, and she had certainly much improved in appearance and gained in flesh, since my return from Australia.

Her dress, too, was well suited to her form and complexion, so that every one who saw her said that she made a very beautiful bride—a remark which is, however, so very generally indulged in on similar occasions, regardless of its truth, that I am not by any means disposed to quote it as conclusive authority on the subject.

Speaking with more regard to details than I have yet done, she was attired in white corded silk caught up with bunches of orange blossom, and elaborately trimmed with Honiton lace. The wreath which crowned her really noble brow was of orange blossom and stephanotis over which a tulle veil was thrown, the latter covered with floss silk stars, with a border of the same. She also wore a gold locket set with pearls, the gift of my mother.

My own present to the bride was a diamond bracelet and ear-rings, which she wore proudly.

In the vestibule of the church she was received by her six bridesmaids, who were all dressed in white grenadine trimmed with blue satin ribbon, with sashes also of grenadine trimmed in the same way. Their bonnets were of tulle and blue convolvulus, from which long tulle veils hung down. Each wore round her neck a gold locket, nominally my own gift, but which had been considerately provided for me by Mr. Morgan, and tastefully enamelled thereon, in blue and white, was the monogram W. and G. To me it was a beautiful and eloquent legend—Washington and Gertrude!—which derived fresh interest from the event it commemorated.

As we walked slowly up the aisle of Grace Church—Gertrude leaning on her father’s arm—while the organ pealed out its swelling tones, filling the air with exquisite harmony, I felt a delicious

glow of pride and satisfaction which language of mine cannot describe. Those who occupied the pews on either side, and they were many, seemed to look with admiring eyes upon us, and wish us joy through the time to come. I imagined they thought with me that I was a lucky fellow, and ought to be very grateful.

The light streaming through the vari-colored glass of the great window, fell in softened splendor upon the waves of faces. A divine radiance seemed to fill the tabernacle, and it was with a very light and elastic step that I approached the altar, at which so many bow the knee in mockery, but where I knelt in sincerity, without a single conflict of emotion.

Ah! the beautiful hours that have passed forever, who would not yield their all to recall them?

I felt getting married decidedly pleasant—indeed, heavenly, to use the intense language of the sensational school.

And when the service commenced, and the officiating clergyman in his white robe read, in his usual impressive style, the service he had read so often before, a dreamy sense of gladness and repose stole over me, and I felt that the *ultima thule* of my aspirations was reached.

Solemnly I uttered the momentous response, and "I WILL" sounded faintly through the "dim religious light," as I stood at the altar. And still fainter was the utterance from other lips, but none the less sincere.

It was with a sense of relief that I rose after the Benediction, and retraced my steps with my wife down the long aisle which led from the altar to Broadway, although we were unmercifully stared at all the way.

The spectators were evidently studying me more now than before the interesting performance which had just taken place. But pride and joy overcame embarrassment, and I felt as brave as a lion, yet as tender as a dove. To my eyes the world in which I had my being was now as beautiful as Gertrude's bouquet of white camelias—itself a fitting emblem of her own purity.

I was now married—actually married. The long-wished-for event had at last occurred, and behold I was transported to the Arcadian shores of matrimony.

We drove home, my wife and I, in rhapsody, and I was at length able to say, "My darling, you are mine at last. Thanks to Divine Providence." Then came the reception, which was a grand affair for a thing of the kind.

I preserved a muscular gravity during the whole of this ordeal, but laughed in my sleeve at intervals—a habit I have contracted during the latter years of my life. I considered the proceedings, on the whole, rather automatic than otherwise, and was not sorry when I received the last visitor's congratulations.

I remember very little of it now, more than that there was a constant stream of people for two hours, and that they all looked pretty hard at me as they bowed, and that some shook hands, and others seemed afraid to venture upon the experiment, and that a few congratulated us gracefully, but most of those who attempted it did it awkwardly, or seemed at a loss what to say. My father-in-law and Mrs. Morgan, however, did their best to make every one feel at home, and the former was never more jovial or florid.

There was a *dejeuner* supplied by Delmonico, regardless of expense, and several hundred visitors were there to partake of it.

Dancing followed the reception, and my bride and I prepared for a trip to Philadelphia, preparatory to sailing for England with my mother ten days afterwards. While the carriage was in waiting for us, and the dancers were going forward and back, and changing partners in the parlor, a touching interview was taking place up-stairs.

My mother flung herself upon me in tears, and kissed me with passionate emotion, and poured blessings upon my head. I felt at last what it was to have a mother's love.

Then Gertrude in her travelling dress entered the room with her mother, and we clasped hands. Both seemed on the verge of weeping with joy; and when the final moment of parting came, the closing scene between mother and daughter made me turn aside with tears in my eyes.

I tore myself away in the midst of tender adieux, and as the carriage drove off, a farewell flutter of white handkerchiefs told of a hearty God-speed more eloquent than words.

"Well, Gertrude, my darling, you are mine!" I spoke. "I wish

I could say all I feel of joy, and gladness, and gratitude, I would then tell you how very, very happy you have made me. But you know it all without my telling you—don't you, my love?" and I saw the love-light in her eyes, to which my own flashed in reply. Two kindred souls were blended in felicity. The desired end of mutual affection was achieved, and the woman I adored and was adored by was mine forever.

CHAPTER LXI.

BACK TO THE OLD WORLD.

The days passed in unruffled serenity at Philadelphia, and when we returned to New York we received fresh congratulations. We spent only one night at the house of my father-in-law, and the next morning my mother joined us, and we drove to Jersey City to embark on the "Arabia" for Liverpool.

We exchanged final farewells with my wife's father and mother, who had come down to see us off, on the Cunard wharf, a few moments after which the steamer moved away, and the broad waters of the bay, sparkling in the splendors of the new-born day, opened upon our view.

I thought of the last time I had left New York for Liverpool, and compared my wretchedness then with my happiness now. What a glorious change had come over my fortunes since that sorrowful day! The agony, the gloom, the desolation had passed away, and lo! I had met with my reward. I had found my mother, gained a wife, and cleared my reputation from the taint of calumny.

Notwithstanding my change of condition, I greatly missed Reginald Wade, my constant companion for so many long months, but I hoped to meet him soon again in England—his inclination, meanwhile, leading him to linger in America.

From the time we receded from the church-spires of New-York till the tall steeples of Liverpool hove in sight, we had pleasant weather, and the days sped gayly.

During the voyage my mother had frequent conversations with me respecting my father, but she entertained no bitter feelings against him, merely regretting that he should have been so wanting in paternal affection as to consign me from my cradle to the life I had led. She begged me to forgive him, as she had forgiven him.

At the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool a letter awaited her, announcing the death of Lord Huntingdon, which left my father heir presumptive to the title.

Women attach great importance to conventional honors, and I candidly believe she was rather glad than otherwise to hear that the old nobleman had shuffled off this mortal coil, and felt more inclined than ever to shake hands again with her husband.

We were both averse to adopting any legal proceedings calculated to annoy him.

We therefore merely caused a bill in equity to perpetuate testimony to be filed, and the allegations contained in the bill, embodying the facts of the case, would force my father to an admission or denial of the truth. If he denied my allegations, then the Court of Chancery could frame issues, and send the case into the Court of Queen's Bench to be tried by jury; if he failed to answer in accordance with the subpoena served upon him by the Court, then a writ of rebellion would be issued against him, and finally he would be outlawed.

The subpoena was served, my mother wrote him a letter, and we both awaited the result. A reply came by post. It ran thus:

“PARIS, December 14, 1853.

“MY DEAR WIFE: The long silence between us has been at length broken, and it is a relief to me.

“Confession is good for the soul, and I will be candid with you and admit the truth of all that has been alleged about our boy: I would say dear boy, but for the manner in which I have acted towards him, and it might sound like a mockery.

“I would have made this frank admission long ago, if I had felt assured that our child still lived; but as it was, I did not wish to pain you by telling the strange facts when no good was likely to arise from such a statement. All that I ask now is

your forgiveness ; your love, I fear, I have forfeited forever, and all my repentance will be in vain."

"I, of course, am unable to speak as to the identity of the young gentleman you so confidently believe to be our child, but I shall make answer to the subpoena which has been served upon me by the Court of Chancery, in accordance with the terms of this letter ; so that if you remain convinced of the fact, there will be no bar to his succeeding to the estate and title should he survive me. I wish you long life and much happiness, and again ask forgiveness for the wrong I did you.

"Affectionately, HENRY."

"P. S. I suppose you have heard of the death of my grandfather, Lord Huntingdon, at the Park. From what you say, and the affidavits filed, I feel certain he is our son, and I acknowledge him as such."

My mother was deeply touched by this open avowal, and she cried over it.

CHAPTER LXII.

I MEET MY FATHER FOR THE SECOND TIME.

We resided temporarily in London, at the house of my great uncle, Mr. Edward Beresford, who very cordially made us all feel very much at home—my mother and Gertrude and I—and I was pleased to see that Gertrude enjoyed her surroundings, and evidently felt perfectly at ease and happy. It gladdened my heart, too, to witness the rapid improvement her health was undergoing. The voyage had braced her and done her a world of good, her freedom from sea-sickness having doubtless had much to do with this.

"Oh, Washington," she once said, "I am so delighted with England and the English people—more than I ever thought I should be, but, perhaps, it's because I am with you, and anywhere with you, my love, would be a paradise to me."

I determined, after mature consideration, to seek an interview with my father, as the best means of narrowing the gap between us, and reconciling, if that were possible, my mother to him.

He was an idle man, and lived most of his time in London, where he had lodgings in Jermyn Street, but I ascertained that he was very seldom at his club—the Athenæum, where I had met him—the scandal attending his separation from his wife having probably made him reluctant to meet many of his club acquaintances.

In order to arrange a casual meeting, one morning at nine o'clock I took a seat in a tailor's shop nearly opposite the house in Jermyn Street where he lived, having previously ascertained—by sending a messenger to inquire—that he was at home.

I saw two gentlemen come out of the house during the first hour that I sat there, but neither, I felt sure, was the one with whom I had dined at the Athenæum in company with Reginald Wade. Still I waited, and finally I was rewarded by seeing one whom I recognized at a glance as the Mr. Duncan to whom I had been then introduced, although I had not seen him from that day to this.

He carried a neatly-folded silk umbrella in his hand, which he used as a stick, wore lavender kid gloves, and walked leisurely in the direction of St. James' Street.

I followed him quickly on the opposite side of the street, and as soon as I came abreast of him crossed over and politely accosted him.

“Good morning, sir,” I said—“Mr. Henry Duncan, I believe?”

“Yes—that is my name,” he replied stiffly, without extending his hand, and evidently very much surprised, not to say startled.

“I had the pleasure of an introduction to you last year at the Athenæum Club, by Mr. Reginald Wade,” I remarked. “We dined together, if you remember?”

“Oh, yes, I do perfectly. How do you do? I hardly knew you, you're so bronzed.”

“Do you know who I am now?”

“Oblige me with your name, or allow me to exchange cards with you, if you please? I’m not quite sure.”

The suspicion who I was evidently flashed across his mind, and he acted like a man confused, and who wanted to be sure before he spoke.

I gave him my card—“Washington Edmonds Duncan.”

“Who are you?—pray tell me?” he asked somewhat excitedly. “Have you just come from the United States?”

“Yes,” I replied, “I came with my mother—your wife, I believe—if you are the Mr. Duncan I suppose you to be.”

He seemed dumbfounded, and the blood fled from his face and left him pallid.

“This is a great surprise,” he said, in a voice somewhat choked with emotion, and a manner betraying great embarrassment. “But how do you know that my wife is your mother, as you say?”

“Did you not write a letter to her about three weeks ago, admitting the allegations in the bill we filed?”

“Ah, yes; that is not what I mean. How do you know, I say, that you are her son?”

“Well, it is a difficult matter to prove anything, logically, but the testimony as to that is conclusive. My mother, who has investigated the case thoroughly, has no doubt on the subject, neither has the woman with whom you left me in the village of Green, near Boston, nor have the lawyers who conducted the investigation and examined the witnesses, nor any of those with whom I lived from the day I left the cottage of Kate Wilkins at Green. Edmonds, too—wasn’t that the name you gave her? Then, is there no family resemblance? I’m told there is. All that I lack to make my identity still more indisputable, is a strawberry mark on my arm, but if I may believe novels so many persons are distinguishable in that way that even it might not be considered proof positive.”

Mr. Duncan smiled grimly.

“I won’t deny, and I won’t admit anything, but I’m willing to do justice. How do I know even that you are the young man my wife believes to be her son? I was introduced to you once, but now, my dear sir, you present yourself in quite a different character. You were then Mr. Ed-

monds—you are now Mr. Duncan. If I only felt sure who you are I would be better satisfied and speak more freely.”

Just then a barouche containing Mr. Beresford, my mother and Gertrude, drove past, and arrested my attention. I signalled them to stop, which was unnecessary, as my mother, I saw, had already prepared to do so.

Mr. Duncan averted his glance from the carriage the moment he saw it, but my mother stepped out, assisted by Mr. Beresford, and came up to us boldly.

“Henry Duncan,” she said sternly, “this is your son and mine. This meeting, I can assure you, is purely accidental, but I’m glad it has occurred, for it enables me to introduce father and son. Do you acknowledge him? I ask this for my child’s sake, not my own,” and her eyes flashed.

“If you are satisfied that he is your son, I am. I have no doubt from the affidavits that accompanied the bill you filed that the Washington Edmonds therein referred to, is the offspring of our marriage, and if this,” turning to me, “is the same Washington Edmonds, the identity is established, but when he first spoke to me I didn’t know who he was. There was no one to introduce him and explain.”

“May I call you father?” said I to him.

“You may,” he replied, nervously.

“Then let me introduce my wife to you,” and I stepped back a few yards to where stood the carriage in which Gertrude and Mr. Beresford were seated, and assisted Gertrude to alight. “I want to introduce you to my father,” said I, and a moment afterwards I led her in astonishment into his presence.

“My wife, Gertrude—my father—Mr. Henry Duncan,” was the simple formula I used upon the occasion.

My father took her hand and said with embarrassment—“I’m glad to meet you, and wish you much happiness.”

“I can stand this no longer, I must ask you to excuse me,” he said, turning to me and my mother. “I bitterly regret what I did, and can never atone for it. To you, Harriet, I can never be what I was. I have given up all hope of that. To my son, I can never look for affection or respect. I don’t deserve it. I loathe the very thought of the transaction, and

would give the world to undo it, but the injury is irreparable. I despise myself for it as much as you can despise me. What can I expect but scorn and contempt and bitter curses? What else do I deserve? Great God, I feel it curdling my heart's blood, and piercing me like ten thousand daggers. But God forgive me."

Just then his voice faltered and, overcome with emotion, he fell backward to the ground in a deep swoon—and so suddenly that I had no time to break his fall.

Both my mother and Gertrude screamed, and I was afraid the latter would faint, but she did not, and after loosening my father's cravat, I led her back to the carriage, while my mother stood by her unconscious husband's side, deeply affected. A crowd gathered in a moment, and it was with great difficulty that I kept a breathing space clear.

"More air," I cried "Keep back—back." Very soon a policeman arrived, and with his assistance I carried him into a shop, near which we had been standing during the entire interview.

He was still unconscious and breathing heavily. Mr. Beresford had gone in pursuit of the nearest doctor, and in about a quarter of an hour a medical man arrived.

"Oh! what can you do for him, doctor?" said my mother, in tears.

The doctor eyed his patient calmly, felt his pulse, and said, "It's a bad case, I'm afraid."

"Why, doctor?" asked my mother.

"Because, ma'm," he replied, "he's in an apoplectic fit."

"Oh! dreadful—dreadful," exclaimed my mother, who seemed to feel as much grief as if she had not been separated from him.

As soon as a stretcher could be procured from the nearest police station, he was carried to his lodgings, and there the doctor directed the efforts which were made to restore consciousness, but, sad to say, all without avail, for my father never rallied. His breathing gradually became more labored, until he expired, little more than three hours from the time he was attacked.

I was present in his bedroom when he drew his last breath,

and so was my mother, and she wrung her hands when she saw that he was no more.

It was a melancholy task that I performed as chief mourner at his funeral, which took place from Huntingdon House : the solemn *cortege* winding its way among the Park trees—with the raven plumes nodding in the bright sunlight—towards the Parish Church of Huntingdon, where, in the family vault, we laid him beside his grandfather, the late Earl.

As I committed his body to the earth, I forgave him the great wrong he had done me.

CHAPTER LXIII.

ON THE FIFTH AVENUE.

In the following May, my mother, Gertrude and I left England for New York, at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Morgan to make them a visit.

“My darling child; how well you’re looking. I could hardly have believed in such a change, if I had not seen it with my own eyes,” exclaimed Gertrude’s mother, as she embraced her on our arrival, and she hardly exaggerated the improvement which had taken place in her health.

“Now, about that partnership,” said Mr. Morgan, a few days after I had reached the house in Union Square.

“Mr. Fipps is ready to retire at any time, and if you like to come into the firm I’ll let him go and give you a half interest. Then the business will be all in the family—eh? Think over it and let me know.”

At Gertrude’s solicitation, I accepted the liberal proposition for a term of three years, and with my mother—she and Gertrude being always excellent friends—we took up our residence in the Fifth Avenue—the finest street for residences in the world—in a brown stone house, given to Gertrude by her father for the purpose, and there we enjoyed as happy a

domestic life as ever fell to the lot of God's creatures here below. We lived handsomely, and, therefore, expensively—as all who know the cost of living in New York can testify—horses, carriages, and a coachman and groom being included in our establishment. We entertained little, however, outside of our own family circle, although Gertrude kept up a large visiting acquaintance, and was fond of giving one or two dancing parties each winter just before Lent—for she was a strict Episcopalian, and Lent with us was a Lenten season indeed, but, as by her influence—both before and since our marriage—and my mother's, I had become and been baptised—mark that!—a member of the same church, there was harmony on this point.

My mother prided herself upon being a strictly Low Church woman, but Gertrude, without being extreme, rather favored the High Church party, while I, not being partial to extremes in any direction, represented the Middle Church.

The most interesting event of the first year of our married life in New York was the appearance of a new character on the scene. It is unnecessary to do more than mention that it was a daughter, and that she was baptised in the name of her mother. My mother and Gertrude's mother seemed to be as proud of this new acquisition as Gertrude herself, and I felt that the greatest danger it stood in was of being killed with kindness.

The business of the house went on prospering so well, that, when the time agreed upon expired, I found that I had more than two hundred thousand dollars to my credit, apart from all the expenses of living in the meantime. Nevertheless, I then withdrew from the house of Henry Morgan and Co. for the purpose of immediately returning to England—whither my mother had gone, accompanied by her maid, six months previously—but the occurrence of a similar event to that which ushered Gertrude the younger into the world, delayed my departure.

This time I had a son, and I decided that he should be named Henry Morgan, in compliment to his grandfather, and he was christened accordingly, in Grace Church, much to the delight of the old gentleman.

This second baptism, apparently, rejuvenated him just as his daughter's marriage had done, and he seemed to be living his life over again in his child and his grand-children.

Gertrude and her parents had always gone to Grace Church, partly because it was nearer their home than any other Episcopal place of worship; and when in Mr. Morgan's employ I had regularly occupied a seat in the family pew. And now my mother, Gertrude and I went there together, and sat in the same old family pew, if there was room for us, or in one adjoining, where my mother had rented two seats.

"It is one peculiarity of the people at Grace," remarked Mr. Morgan, on one occasion, with less than his usual reverence, "that they like to worship the Lord, admire the latest fashions, and listen to operatic music, vocal and instrumental, at the same time. They are also fond of dressing within an inch of their lives, and they want everyone to see their fine clothes as they walk to and from church. Most of them, I fear, attend Grace Church, because it's fashionable, and they wish to see and disport themselves there. The aim of some would seem to be not to save their souls—not to humble themselves before God, and prepare for another world, but to be seen of men—especially the girls, I'm sorry to say, and a few of the women, who ought to know better. That, Washington, isn't religion—it's a mere pretence, and I regret to see such a frivolous spirit displayed there. Bless you, they put me down as an old-fogy when I tell them what I think of all the flirting and vanity and vain-glory we see in our so-called fashionable churches. Give me honest simplicity and earnest piety. Fashion—pshaw! They even talk of fashionable funerals, now-a-days! What a mockery of the dead! The wicked ones will find, however, that a fashionable funeral wont carry them to heaven, no more than a fashionable wedding will help to furnish a house. I go to Grace Church because, I may say, I've always gone there, but it has changed vastly since I first attended divine service within its walls. Now it often seems to me more like the opera than a place of worship, but I satisfy my own conscience that I am not one of those who sustain its fashionable reputation. There are a good many sincerely de-

vout people—many of our oldest and best citizens, who go there like myself for grace, and grace alone, and people should go to church only in order that they may grow in grace, and serve the Lord with all their hearts.”

“You are severe, are you not, in your criticism?” said I, “but I have no doubt there is more truth than poetry in what you say, although some of the Grace people, thinking the cap fitted themselves, would, doubtless, be very indignant if we told them so.”

“Yes, the empty headed aspirants for social distinction, those eaten up with their own vanity and love of show, and those who have no religion in their hearts would, but sensible people would recognize the justice of my remarks. What we want in Grace Church is a little more sackcloth and ashes, and less finery.”

But for all this, Mr. Morgan would have been the last to desert Grace Church, and his eye and ear were, I think, rather pleased than otherwise by what his conscience disapproved.

CHAPTER LXIV.

MY GRANDFATHER DIES.

I returned to England with Gertrude and the olive branches—which were a never failing source of delight to her—and, having rented a London mansion at 10 Eaton Square, I quietly settled down to a life of leisure, although not of idleness.

My mother had a delightful country seat, which had been the home of her paternal ancestors for generations back—Beresford Manor—in a picturesque part of Kent, and although she liked London during the season, and made her home with me while it lasted, she rejoiced to get back to her country residence in August, and Gertrude and I were glad to go with her. There we stayed until December, and then returned to town together to spend Christmas. But before the end of January

we were at the Manor again, and only came back to town at the end of April—just in time for the opening of the London season, with all its fashion and pomp, vain-glory and frivolity.

Three years passed in this way, and meanwhile, only the life of a feeble old man stood between me and the peerage of Huntingdon. The present Earl had been translated from his Colonial See to one at home soon after his accession to the title, and several times—twice with Gertrude—I had visited him at his Palace by invitation. I was his only grandchild, and he always welcomed me affectionately, and spoke to me of the necessity of holiness and the beauty of a Christian life. The Bishop was a pious man, but fond of good living, and he never allowed himself less than a bottle of port at dinner, in addition to either stout or ale. “But,” said he, “although I take it, you need not. Habit is second nature, and enough is as good as a feast.”

The bishop had a well fed look and large features, reddened by wine, but he was, he informed me, a martyr to rheumatism, so much so, indeed, that he always showed great lameness in his walk and required the support of a stick.

Twice only, and that on the occasion of my first two interviews with him had he alluded to my father's conduct, in deceiving my mother concerning myself, and then he expressed hearty condemnation of his conduct. “Strange, is it not,” he once remarked, “that those who have been the best instructed should often be the first to do the devil's work. I'm sorry to say that the sons of bishops have in so many cases distinguished themselves by furnishing bad examples, that their wickedness is becoming almost proverbial. It shows the perversity of human nature and the need we have of the Holy Spirit to cleanse and purify our hearts and make us shun evil, and live only for good, hoping for the reward of the Just hereafter. Young man, serve the Lord while you are young, and you will have a clear conscience—its own best reward—and a firm faith in a glorious immortality when you are old. A man without religion is as a ship without a rudder. Never, Washington, be without that. It is the best chart and compass that you can find. Remember, whoso honors Him, He will honor.

When you succeed to my title and estates, which will be before long—for the time is near at hand when my Heavenly Master will summon me to give an account in the spirit for the deeds done in the flesh—do not allow yourself to be elated or filled with the pride which often attends success, but be meek and lowly, and remember that earthly glory is transitory. Take your Redeemer for your example. He rode into Jerusalem on the back of that despised creature, the ass. What a beautiful spectacle of humility He presented. We have but a little time to stay here on earth, and we can carry nothing away with us. Man's highest duty is to prepare for eternity, and there is no knowing how soon the great Reaper Death may come to any of us."

I thanked him for his good advice, and promised to walk in the paths of righteousness.

One bleak morning in December, 1859, I received a note from the Lord Bishop's Secretary, saying that my grandfather was suddenly prostrated by a severe rheumatic attack in the region of the heart, and his medical attendants feared that owing to his age—he was in his seventy-third year—it would terminate fatally.

I left by the next train for Worcester, and found him in his Palace, very low. He, however, recognized me as I entered his bedroom and motioned me with his face to draw near his bedside.

He had not sufficient strength to extend his hand, but he said in a faint whisper, "God bless you, I'm going home."

Then his eyes closed, and his spirit escaped without a struggle. So tranquilly did he die that it was only by examining his pulse and putting a mirror before his mouth that his physician ascertained that he had gone to that bourne whence no traveller returns, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

He was buried beside his son Henry, in the family vault in the old parish church of Huntingdon, and here again I was chief mourner, for he left no sorrowing child to shed a tear over his grave.

CHAPTER LXV.

LAST WORDS.

Years more have elapsed, and I am no longer known as Mr. Washington Edmonds Duncan, but as the Earl of Huntingdon, of Huntingdon Park, Gloucester, although I still retain my town residence in Eaton Square. Upon succeeding to the title, immediately after the death of my grandfather, his solicitor informed me that a few weeks previously he had made a will leaving me the bulk of his personal property, valued at about forty thousand pounds, which I soon afterwards duly received at the hands of the executors—both clergymen of the church of England, and old friends of the deceased, to whom he had left two hundred pounds each as compensation for their services in that capacity.

Gertrude wears her honors as Countess of Huntingdon with becoming grace and modesty, and she finds sweeter companionship in her children,—we have now four,—two sons and two daughters,—than any she can find in the gay world, while her health I rejoice to say is firmly re-established. In Gertrude the younger I find much to remind me of Gertrude the mother, and we six are a happy family of lovers. Never was man more blessed than I.

Mr. and Mrs. Morgan are still living in New York, and correspond with us regularly, and both are talking of coming over to see us next summer.

And what of Reginald Wade?

He is back in England and married to his first love, against whom his father warned him with the threat of cutting him off with a shilling if he dared to commit the indiscretion of giving his hand to the penniless daughter of a country curate.

We visit each other often in London, and his wife and mine are the best of friends. I never enjoyed attending any wedding, except my own, as much as I did his, and although the event was a long time postponed, it resulted very happily. Better late than never, and Reginald, I know, has reason to congratulate himself on his good fortune.

I have not lost sight of Kate Wilkins, but every year have sent her a draft for a thousand dollars. She became a widow soon after I visited her in her native village, and hence my assistance was doubly acceptable. She now, in addition to having a good round sum in a savings bank, owns not only the cottage she lives in, and the lot of ground in its vicinity, but several other lots and houses adjacent, and I have the satisfaction of having in her case made at least one fellow creature comfortable for life and, as she expresses it, truly happy.

My great uncle, Mr. Edward Beresford, who took such a kindly interest in my mother's behalf, in her search for me, is dead, and my mother has inherited the whole of his large property, real and personal, with certain unimportant exceptions, in accordance with the terms of his last will and testament, with a reversionary interest, however, in my favor so far as the real property is concerned. This leaves her one of the richest women in England in her own right, her estate being now worth at least three hundred thousand pounds.

I have said nothing hitherto about my maiden speech in the House of Lords on the treatment of the Caffres in the Cape Colony, but it was so far successful in attracting attention that on the following day two of the London daily journals made it the subject of leading articles, and a third incidentally mentioned it as full of wise and practical suggestions.

THE END.



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